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# THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN HISTORY

By  
ROBERT W. McLAUGHLIN



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## PREFACE

IN connection with the publication of this book it was my good fortune to have the manuscript come to the attention of Professor George M. Dutcher, of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. Most of the suggestions offered by Professor Dutcher were accepted; a very few it did not seem best to accept. But all of them were gratefully received and given careful consideration. It should be said, in justice to Professor Dutcher, that his comments had to do with certain important details rather than with the central thought. For the thought of the book, also the form which the development of this thought takes in the pages of the book, I am alone responsible. The assistance rendered, however, was of such value that I am not only under obligation but esteem it a privilege to express my indebtedness to this distinguished historian, whose sound learning, coupled with the true scholar's spirit of helpfulness, is best known to those most familiar with the workers in the field of history.

ROBERT W. McLAUGHLIN.

Worcester, Mass., July 22, 1926.



## INTRODUCTION

THE seasoned reader of serious books is rarely willing to read well into a book to learn what the book is about. Instead he expects the author at the outset to state his thought. Then, if interested in the thought, he will begin his journey through the pages, which journey possibly will end with the last page.

This being so, let us at once state our thought in the form of a question as follows: Is it possible for the historian to-day to reach a conclusion from the page of history regarding the final meaning of history? The question is a big one—perhaps too big for the historian to answer, although the historians of a generation ago thought they could answer the question. Certainly, it is a difficult question, and never more difficult than at the present time. Yet, for reasons which will be given later, it is a question that needs to be considered in these days.

Notice, however, it is the answer of the historian, not the answer of the theologian, philosopher, or scientist, that is sought. The theologian seeks an answer regarding revelation, the philosopher regarding human nature, and the scientist regarding nature. But to the historian belongs the answer, if there be an answer, regarding history. This answer he must search for on the page of history. He may ask the question, Why? Having done this, he must immediately ask the question, What? That is, he must test any answer he gives as to the meaning of history by

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the facts as he finds them in history. In other words, the attempt is made in the pages of this book to find an answer to this big and difficult question by the use of the historical method.

Before proceeding with the discussion it may be well to recognize the fact that a question such as this will cause uneasiness on the part of some historical scholars. They will feel that this question has no place in a work that purports to be historical. The student, so they will say, has no concern with the general meaning of history, to say nothing about its final meaning. His task is to study the documents and remains of man. These are his material, which, as interpreted, give us history. In support of their assertion these scholars who are uneasy will quote the famous words of Francis Bacon, that "men should bid themselves for a while renounce conceptions and begin to make acquaintance with things themselves."<sup>1</sup>

In reply to this criticism it should be said that there is no intention of dealing with "conceptions" at the expense of "things in themselves." As already stated, the discussion will be strictly historical, and so limited to a study of the facts as found on the page of history. Further, and in agreement with those who object to the raising of this question, the real task of the student will be kept in mind. This is not to search for the final meaning or even the meaning of history. His task is to recapture the processes of the past. He does this by explaining the relation of

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Allen Johnson, *The Historian and Historical Evidence*, p. 157. Scribners.



facts that constitute events. As he recaptures these processes by explaining the relation of facts he interprets and so creates history, for the historian creates history even as the theologian creates theology and the scientist creates science. But in doing this it may be questioned whether the historian need limit himself to "things in themselves" and deny himself "conceptions."

On the contrary, it may be asserted that what historical scholarship requires to-day is the liberating effect which comes as increasing attention is given to the "conceptions." The fact is, the scholar at his best is always a blend of scientist and philosopher. The one in him deals with things; the other with thoughts about things. As Browning states it:

"God has conceded two sights to man—  
One of man's whole work time's completed plan,  
The other of the minute's work, man's first  
Step to the plan's completeness."<sup>2</sup>

Having considered the objection of some historical scholars, let us return to our central thought as suggested by the question about history and its final meaning. This, of course, is an old question. It is about as old as history itself. Probably, when men first interpreted the facts, and so made history, they asked about its meaning. Yet the historian to-day is compelled to approach this question in a somewhat different way than did the historians of other days. Changes have taken place in the broad field of scholarship. These changes need to be clearly understood

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Browning, *Sordello*.

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and will be dealt with more at length in later chapters. At this point, however, in order to show that the historical scholar must needs modify his approach, two changes will be mentioned.

One is the change regarding man as the central fact in history. There is nothing new in this fact. With his mind focused upon his particular field of work the historian has always seen man as central. The records and remains, which constitute the material for interpretation, have never yielded anything else. The fact is as clearly apprehended in the writings of Herodotus as in the writings of Breasted. But from the days of the Father of History until recent times, it was the big man as king, warrior, and statesman who, largely, was seen. To-day the big-man idea of history is modified by the social idea of history. In a word, the aristocratic has given place to the democratic conception. Because of this change, old as the question is about the meaning of history, it takes on a new significance. Moreover—and this is the important thought—because of this profound change in our conception of history, the question regarding its final meaning has become more difficult to answer.

The other change is found in the modern conception of energy. Doubtless some who read these words will be surprised at the mention of a conception of physical science in a discussion that has to do with history. "What possible connection," some will ask, "is there between a physicist with his theory about energy and an historian interpreting records and remains?" Well, it must be admitted that the connec-

tion is not obvious. But let us remember that this modern conception of energy gives us a big idea. And an idea if big enough becomes as big as all out of doors. That is, if it holds true in one place, it holds true in every place. An illustration of this is seen in the Darwinian interpretation of evolution which two generations ago began in the field of biology and spread to other fields of learning. So with this modern interpretation of creation in terms of energy. To-day it dominates the physical sciences. But it is gradually influencing thinkers in other fields.

An indication that this idea has reached the field of history is seen in the fact that a few of our historians in telling the story of mankind begin with the earth in relation to other bodies, then tell us about the rocks, pass to reptiles and animals, and finally reach man himself. Soon all our historians, under the influence of this seminal idea, will think of history as the scientist thinks of nature, and the philosopher thinks of human nature, as a multitudinous expression of energy. He will think of the past formed by recorded acts as manifestations in time and space of energy in three forms—the physical, mental, and spiritual.

But in the minds of some readers to speak of history in the terms of the person and energy seems rather vague and unsatisfactory. By themselves it must be admitted that these terms throw little light on the question of history and its final meaning. Their value, however, is in what they suggest. When thought about carefully, this central fact in history—

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the person, and this generalization regarding history—energy, raise two far-reaching questions that bear directly upon history and its ultimate interpretation.

The first of these questions is this: Is there in history any intimation of a goal toward which man seems to be moving? This, it is needless to say, leads away to the fascinating and difficult problem of progress in history. But this will be considered more fully in a later chapter. What we want to indicate just here is that once the person is seen as the only significant factor in history, the question arises whether there is a goal toward which the person is moving.

To illustrate this question let us turn to the story of anthropology. As told to-day there are furnished us pictures of man in prehistoric times—the Pithecanthropus, the Piltdown, the Neanderthal, and the Cro-Magnon man. These pictures, to be sure, are reconstructions based upon meager material, and so in a measure imaginary. Still, the material is sufficient to give us fairly accurate reconstructions of the heads. Arranged in chronological order, beginning with Pithecanthropus and ending with the Cro-Magnon man, the question of a goal toward which man is moving cannot help being asked. Now, turn from the story of anthropology to the gospel story in the New Testament. In the narratives that constitute this story there is the character sketch of a man. If man is the central fact of history, this Man, some of us believe, is *the* Man of history. As this picture is constructed on the basis of the New Testament documents, as any other character picture is constructed

historically, there appears what seems to be a possible goal toward which man in history is moving. At least this was the belief of the apostle as expressed in the words: "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, *unto a full-grown man*, unto the measure of the stature of . . . Christ."<sup>3</sup> Again, let me remind you that this is only an illustration. All that we desire to insist upon is that the central fact of history—the person—leads away to the great question of a goal toward which man in history is moving. This conception of the person is not a mere barren fact but a fact fairly tingling with meaning.

The other question may be stated in this way: Is there a Vast Mind Energy which is the creative activity ever expressing itself through the physical, mental, and spiritual forms of energy that take shape in historical events? Once feel the pressure of the present-day thought about energy and this question regarding a Vast Mind Energy follows as inevitably as does the question about the goal, once the mind has apprehended the thought of the person as central in history. To state the question in another form: History is the interpreted record of the finite—man. Is the finite, after all, the infinite in process of realization?

Those familiar with the best thought of our day know that there are scientists and philosophers who are answering this question in the affirmative. There are scientists who of nature say, with the psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ephesians 4. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Psalms 24. 1.

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Also there are philosophers who accept Paul's words about human nature, "He made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."<sup>5</sup> But what about the historian? Whether he can give an answer to this stupendous question regarding a Vast Mind Energy, as do the philosopher and scientist, may be doubted, for he is at a disadvantage as compared with these thinkers.

Why the historian is at a disadvantage in dealing with this question should be clearly understood. To do this, certain conditions need to be kept in mind. As already mentioned, one condition is the increasing complexity of his work. This condition will be considered in a later chapter. Here all that is necessary is to notice that owing to this tendency in the direction of complexity an answer regarding a Vast Mind Energy is less readily given than a generation ago. Then the historian affirmed his belief; to-day he is reluctant to make an affirmation.

Another condition to notice is that in the pursuit of truth an increase of knowledge does not necessarily mean an increase of understanding. On the contrary, sometimes a thing seemingly simple ceases to be simple the moment more is known about the thing. A single illustration: Historical evidence is based on the mental process of perception. A generation ago this process was thought of as simple. To-day, thanks to the psychologist, our knowledge of this process is much increased. Because of this increased knowledge perception is thought of as an exceedingly mysterious process. For example, memory

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<sup>5</sup> Acts 17. 26.

modifies perception as a bit of hidden metal aboard a boat deflects the needle of a compass. The result is, students are modest in making claims regarding their understanding of this process. That is, they know more about perception, and so know that they understand less its meaning.

With this illustration before us, turn to history. Like the psychologist the historian is the victim of his knowledge. As compared with the scientist this places him at a distinct disadvantage. If the scientist could know as much about nature as the historian knows about history, he might find it more difficult to answer this question about the Vast Mind Energy. Vico, the Italian thinker of the seventeenth century, had this thought in mind when he said that the historian knows more about history than the scientist knows about nature. History, so he quaintly reminds us, is made by man, whereas nature is made by God. Man, he tells us, can know better a thing he makes than a thing made by another. But—and this is the point—to know more about a thing is not necessarily to understand a thing better.

Still another condition to notice is the limitation placed upon the historian as compared with the philosopher. The philosopher interprets human life; the historian interprets records and remains. But the records and remains, which, interpreted, become history, are only a small part of human life. History is a sieve with a large mesh. Because the mesh is large the greater part of man's acts pass through the mesh and are lost as far as history is concerned. Moreover, the philosopher in searching for his an-

swer may seek relief from the tyranny of facts by failing back upon the logical processes of the mind. No such relief is possible for the historian. He must hold to the facts as he keeps his eye on the page of the record. He cannot turn from the facts while he says, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains," and then ask, "From whence cometh my help?" only to answer, "My help cometh from God." As a historian, if he find God as the Vast Mind Energy, he must find him in the facts, and in all the facts revealed in the records and remains of man.

Enough has been said to indicate the trend of thought in the chapters of this book. To gather this up in a few sentences, the statement is as follows: The general thought is suggested by the question, Is it possible for the historian to reach a conclusion regarding the final meaning of history? This question is considered under the influence of two modern ideas: one is the democratic idea of man as the central fact in history; the other is the evolutionary idea of all creation including history as the expression of energy. The first of these ideas leads at once to the fascinating question of a goal toward which man in history is moving. The second of these ideas inevitably raises the question of a Vast Mind Energy behind and working through history.

The seasoned reader of serious books mentioned in the opening paragraph usually makes another demand upon the author. Along with his demand for a statement about the thought of the book, he expects in the introductory chapter to be told of any facts that



would seem to justify a discussion such as is undertaken in the book. As this demand is entirely reasonable, let us give attention to certain facts.

The first is an awakened interest on the part of the average man in the subject of history. Although our discussion will have to do with a deeper problem of history, still the fact of an awakened interest in history has some meaning. This turning to history, it is reasonable to believe, is connected in some way with the World War, taking place as it has in the years immediately following the war. Probably it can be shown that in the years following every war of modern times there has been a turning to the subject of history by the general reader. This seems to have occurred in connection with the Civil War in the United States, the Franco-Prussian War in Europe, and the Boer War in Africa. But it seems to have taken place to a greater degree in recent years because the World War, as the name implies, was on a vaster scale.

To accept as reasonable this explanation it is only necessary to remember the conditions that prevailed during this titanic struggle. Recall, for example, that during four years the people of the civilized world studied maps and read accounts of battles. In doing this certain historically significant names were constantly mentioned—Rhine, Verdun, Dardanelles, Vistula, and others. Also recall that accompanying the maps and military dispatches were informing articles about the history suggested by these names. The battles in northern Italy suggested the feats of Hannibal; the struggle by the Rhine the story of

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Cæsar's legions; the stand at Verdun the division of the empire following the death of Charlemagne; the slaughter at the Dardanelles the appearance of the Osmanli and the fall of Constantinople; the crossing of the Vistula the house on its banks in which Copernicus lived. Thus a taste for history was created in the minds of millions of people.

Now, with these conditions in mind, notice that since 1918 a book on history has appeared which from the publishers' standpoint has broken all sale records. The blue ribbon of the reading world has been taken away from the book of fiction and given to a book on history. It is no longer necessary to bewail the fact that people are not interested in serious reading. I refer, of course, to Wells' *Outline of History*. First published in two expensive volumes, the work had a large sale. Followed by an edition less expensive and in one volume, it had a still larger sale. Along with its publication in one volume, its chapters appeared as syndicated articles in newspapers all over the world. There was a time when millions of people daily were reading this work either in book or newspaper. It is entirely within bounds to say that for a like period of time there is nothing to equal this in the history of literature.

Attention is called to this work of Wells, it is needless to say, apart from any consideration of its merits as historical writing. The scholar may deal harshly with this book. But he will make no mistake in giving it careful consideration, for any writer on history who is read by the millions instead of the thousands must be reckoned with. This writer, it may

be granted, strikes a blow at that which is believed to be fundamental by many sound historical scholars. This aspect of the work, however, will be touched upon in a later paragraph. At this point it is mentioned because it gives us a striking illustration of the fact that following the World War there has come an awakened interest on the part of the average man in the subject of history.

There is danger of making too much of this aroused interest in history. The general reader, newspaper, magazine, or popular book in hand, may be taken too seriously. Those of us who write about the deeper problems of history may allow the wish to become the father to the thought, and believe that the average man is interested in our deeper interpretation. Against this danger we need to be on our guard. Whittier had a unique farmer as a neighbor whose remarks upon human existence were quaint. Some of these remarks Whittier repeated to Emerson, who suggested that this farmer should read Plato. A copy was loaned the farmer, who having read the book returned it with the remark that "he found that this Mr. Plato had some of his ideas." Well, it will not do to assume that the average man to-day is thinking about history with a depth equal to that of Plato.

On the contrary, the evidence seems to be otherwise. The World War may explain in a large measure this awakened interest. But much that was said during the struggle, in the retrospect of the years since 1918, looks pretty thin. Some were sure that the idea of progress was a fiction of the brain. Others quickly reached the conclusion that Christianity was a dismal

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failure. Still others were sure that the struggle was a testing of religious faith. Often during the darkest days the remark was heard, "If victory does not come, I will abandon my faith in God." It was thought that in speaking in this way people were having their faith tested. Instead, they were having their absence of faith revealed. They were making of the religious life a kind of pawn shop with a bargaining God inside, and on the counter they were laying the jewel of their faith that they might drive a bargain. But the jewel was spurious—only paste!

No, let us not be misled as regards the deepening thought of the people during the years of and during the years following the World War. All that safely can be affirmed is that during these years millions became interested in history, and the history studied was neither provincial nor national but general and almost universal. This, however, has meaning, for, with this awakened interest in history, perhaps the time is opportune to say something about the deeper meaning of history. The old maxim, "Strike while the iron is hot," holds true with the writing of books as in the shop of the smithy.

Turning from the general reader to the trained historian, a second fact that justifies a discussion such as is undertaken in this book is the revival of interest in the synthetic as contrasted with the analytic treatment of history.

Like the fact of the awakened interest on the part of the average reader, too much should not be made of this revival of interest in synthetic history, for, as we shall see in a moment, many of our scholars look

with misgiving upon the kind of synthesis attempted in these pages. But as regards the increase of interest among historians in the synthetic treatment there can be no doubt. For half a century the emphasis has been on the work of analysis; to-day there is a shift in the emphasis to the work of synthesis. The evidence for this is unmistakable. Think, for example, of the books that have appeared in recent years dealing with certain big ideas, such as freedom of thought, progress, and unity. Notice the discussion going on in historical circles over the relation of the social sciences to history. Consider also the renewed interest in the fascinating but perplexing problem of the laws in history.

It is interesting to speculate as to the reasons for this increasing interest in the work of synthesis. Doubtless one reason is found in the World War, although the extent to which this struggle has influenced the thinking of our scholars is not clear. Yet there is probably some connection, for those scholars who have been willing to remove their elbows from their desks and seek contact with thoughtful people on the street must have found that the questions in the minds of such people have been precisely those questions which for their answers demand the work of synthesis. How often since 1918 have our historical scholars been asked these questions: Is there such a thing as progress? Along with the physical and mental is there the spiritual in history? In the light of recent history is it possible to believe in a providential order?

A further reason for this awakened interest in

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synthetic history takes us back of the World War, and is found in the vast expansion both in time and space of the field of history. Workers in other fields have been bringing their contributions. Under the influences of the enrichment of historical study due to these contributions it was inevitable that the historian would respond by turning to the larger aspects of history. Wells, in the work already mentioned, with genuine insight sensed this change taking place, for he begins his journalistic treatment of history with a quotation from Ratzel as follows: "A philosophy of the human race, worthy its name, must begin with the heavens and descend to the earth, must be charged with the conviction that all existence is one—a single conception sustained from beginning to end upon one identical law." This Wells tries to do, for in his opening chapter he writes about the earth in time and space—the time being endless and the space immeasurable—and in his closing chapter about the next stage in history, bringing the narration down to 1920.

Along with the World War and the expansion of the field of history another reason is found in the growing dissatisfaction of many scholars with the work of analysis to the exclusion of the work of synthesis. There is no disposition to belittle the work of analysis. The dissatisfaction is expressed in the words, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." These scholars who are dissatisfied perceive that the facts assembled by analysis have value only as from the facts apprehended by synthesis truths are derived.

Still, this statement about an increasing interest in the work of synthesis needs to be qualified. Some historians will object to the carrying of the work of synthesis as far as it is carried in this book. Such terms as "a goal toward which man in history seems to be moving" and a "Vast Mind Energy expressing itself in history" will cause a lifting of the eye-brows by these scholars. Because of this let us digress for a moment and consider these objections.

The first objection will have to do with introducing the conception of a goal into a work that is historical. To do this, so these scholars will say, indicates that our study is pursued under the influence of a definite philosophy of history—the philosophy in this instance being spiritual.

Now, this objection seems plausible enough until looked at closely. It is obvious that the student should aim at maintaining an open mind. But does he necessarily close his mind because he seeks the facts under the guidance of a given philosophy? Is it not possible to seek the facts in order to test the philosophy? Moreover, those historical scholars whose writings are worth reading do their work under the guidance of a particular philosophy which seems to them valid. The term "philosophy of history" may not be used, for just now it is not considered good form to use this term. Rather, you are expected to speak about history that is economic, biological, sociological, psychological, or anthropo-geographical. But these terms are only new labels for the old bottle of history. The contents of the bottle remain the same. So in the chapters of this book. The work is done

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under the guidance of a particular philosophy, the spiritual. Involved in this philosophy is the conception of a goal toward which man in history seems to be moving.

Involved, also, in this philosophy is the conception of a "Vast Mind Energy" expressing itself in history. Probably more of our scholars will object to this term than to the term about the goal. Those who object will assert that such a conception belongs to theology. History, they will say, deals with finite man as revealed in his documents and remains. The conception of God as Vast Mind Energy involves the infinite and so is beyond history. This seems to be the thought of Professor Shotwell when in his brilliant essay entitled "The Interpretation of History" he says: "The infinite lies outside of experience, and experience is the sphere of history."<sup>6</sup> The second part of this statement, that experience is the sphere of history, is true. Of this there can be no doubt. The question, however, needing to be answered, is whether the infinite is in the finite experience. Perhaps the infinite is in the finite as the ocean is in the inlet. The human person with his experience is a marvelous and bewildering entity. He probably contains within himself more than any of us have yet dreamed. What we seek to know is whether the infinite is in the finite in the sense that the finite is the infinite seeking expression. There is no light shed on the question by an *a priori* statement, even though found in a historical essay. For some of us would like to know how this able historian knows that the infinite lies outside

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<sup>6</sup> *American Historical Review*, July, 1913.



of experience. It seems to me he is simply begging the question. Further, this scholar in the words quoted is probably typical of most of our best historians regarding the question of God and history. If so, these words contain an intimation that our historians need to secure a firmer grip upon the spiritual implications in the modern doctrine of energy.

It may be granted that to approach our study under the guidance of a particular philosophy which involves the spiritual conception of a goal and a Vast Mind Energy has its perils. But the perils are those involved in approaching history under the guidance of any philosophy or theory of history, whether it be economic, mental, or spiritual. For to seek the facts under the guidance of a philosophy, that the philosophy may be tested by the facts, is not easy. 'The truth is, the penalty the student must pay for his willingness to use a philosophy as a guiding principle in his search for facts is the danger he runs of abusing his philosophy by allowing it to control his facts instead of guiding him in the selection of his facts. It may be questioned whether any scholar is able to entirely avoid this danger. At the best he can keep in mind the distinction between a philosophy that controls and one that guides. To what extent this distinction has been maintained in the chapters that follow is for the reader to decide.

Then it needs to be said that any philosophy of history should be held tentatively. It is in this qualified sense that the student does his work with an open mind. He must be ready to modify or abandon his philosophy. A confession may be in order here: The

writer began this study some years ago with a definite philosophy of history. In assembling and interpreting the facts he has been compelled to modify his philosophy. He comforts himself, however, by remembering that no less a thinker than the great Darwin had the same experience—only more of it, for he tells us: "I have steadily endeavored to keep my mind free so as to give up any hypothesis, however much beloved (and I cannot resist forming one on every subject), as soon as facts are shown to be opposed to it. Indeed, I have had no choice but to act in this manner, for with the exception of the Coral Reefs, I cannot remember a single first-formed hypothesis which had not after a time to be given up or greatly modified."<sup>7</sup>

A third fact to notice is the change within a generation in the approach to the question of the meaning of nature, human nature, and history.

When correctly understood this fact in itself is sufficient to justify a discussion such as is undertaken in this book. The significance of this fact is that the change in the approach just mentioned is not uniform. Whereas the scientists and philosophers are advancing in the work of synthesis, the historians as regards this question of the final meaning of history are lagging behind. To state the situation in another way: A change is taking place in philosophic and scientific thought as regards the spiritual meaning that is much more pronounced than any change taking place in historic thought.

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<sup>7</sup> *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. i, p. 83. Used by permission of D. Appleton and Company, publishers, New York.

As the method used in this study is historical, let us appeal to recent history to show the change that is taking place in the thinking of many scientists and philosophers. In doing so think first of the change which has taken place in less than a generation among scientists as regards the meaning of nature. During the last generation Huxley stood forth as a leading exponent of Darwinism; in this generation the Darwinian interpretation of nature has no more loyal exponent than J. Arthur Thomson. The writing of these two scientists shows that each of them possesses the rare skill of stating in language the layman can understand the conclusions reached by the specialists. Yet what a change since Huxley's day! For example, read his famous Romanes Lecture, entitled "Evolution and Ethics," delivered in 1893 at Oxford University. In this lecture he places nature in opposition to human nature. The ethical is to be attained not through the aid of but by overcoming nature, for in the mind of Huxley and most scientists of a generation ago nature was a "huge gladiatorial show." Having read this lecture by Huxley, turn to the Gifford Lectures by J. Arthur Thomson entitled *The System of Animate Nature*, delivered in 1915 at Saint Andrews University. The huge gladiatorial show has gone; the survival of the fittest is balanced by the survival to be fit; cooperation no less than competition exists; man is not in antagonism to nature but the crown of nature; and running through nature, inorganic and organic, is a spiritual purpose.

A like change has taken place in the philosopher's attitude to human nature as regards the doctrine of

Divine Providence. Those interested in philosophical questions twenty-five years ago will remember the volume by Alexander B. Bruce entitled *The Providential Order*. This volume was read not only by those interested in philosophy but especially by those of theological training, for the volume was by the author of *The Training of the Twelve*, found in every well-selected minister's library. The lectures on *The Providential Order* were given as the Gifford Lectures in 1897 at the University of Glasgow. Now, turn from these lectures to a recent volume of Gifford Lectures on the same subject and delivered before the same university in 1920, entitled *A Faith That Enquires*, by Sir Henry Jones. When these lectures by Jones are compared with those by Bruce the same striking contrast is felt as between the lectures of Huxley and Thomson. There is a depth, a sweep, also a warmth in these later lectures. There is evidence of a movement forward of philosophy in the direction of a more spiritual interpretation of the meaning of humanity.

Here a word of caution is needed. There is no intention of picturing the scientists and philosophers of our day as a mighty army marching forward under the waving banner of Jehovah. To do so would be to give a false impression. There are scientists who would reject Thomson's interpretation, as there are philosophers who would reject the interpretation of Jones. All that we are able to say is that evidence exists of a tendency in the direction of a spiritual interpretation of nature and human nature.

But a different condition is met as we turn to the

historians. The reverse of what has taken place in science and philosophy seems to have taken place in history. A generation ago the spiritual note was found in much of the best historical work in the sense that the authors expressed convictions as to the final meaning of history; to-day this note is almost entirely absent. There are, to be sure, a few exceptions. A book by Shailer Mathews entitled *The Spiritual Interpretation of History*, a book by Benedetto Croce entitled *On History*, and a book by Henry Osborn Taylor entitled *The Freedom of the Mind in History* may be mentioned. But, as indicated, these are exceptions.

If the reader is not familiar with the historical writing of the last century, he can easily test the accuracy of my observation by reading a volume such as Gooch's *The History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century*. In brief biographical form the leading historians of that century are discussed—Niebuhr, Droysen, Guizot, Stubbs, Freeman, and Ranke. Having done this, let the reader select a like number of historians who to-day are at work and whose work is being widely read. If this is done, the reader will understand what is meant.

Now, in calling attention to this situation, nothing is further from my mind than to suggest that historians are any less religious than scientists and philosophers. Also, in making this comparison, the difficulties peculiar to the historian as he deals with the spiritual element in history are not forgotten. The fact is—and it is a strange fact—the material the historian works with is less likely to suggest the spir-

itual than the material the scientist works with. But this aspect of the historian's work will be considered more at length in a later chapter. Again, as this comparison is made, there is no disposition to overlook the splendid advance made by historical scholarship in many directions. Recall, for example, the abandonment of the aristocratic for the democratic conception of man in history. Green begins the Preface to his famous *History* with the words: "The aim of the following work is defined by its title; it is a history, not of English Kings or English Conquests, but of the English People."<sup>8</sup> These words were challenged by historians a generation ago; to-day these words express a superb commonplace of historical thought.

Still, having said these things, it remains true that our outstanding scholars are not doing for history what such scholars as those named are doing for science and philosophy. Perhaps the next step forward will bring these historians again to this baffling but tremendously significant question of history and its final meaning. If so, an even brighter day will dawn for historical study.

Another fact to consider is that of the books on history written since the World War those most widely read are unfavorable to Christianity thought of as a stupendous event in history.

This is a sweeping statement to make. Its accuracy can be tested only as concrete illustrations are chosen. To do this five books that are being widely read by

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<sup>8</sup> Green, *A Short History of the English People*, vol. i. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

different classes of readers and whose influence easily can be traced will be mentioned. However, before these books are named let me ask the reader to keep two things in mind. One is that there is no intention of discussing the doctrinal aspects of the Christian religion. This is a historical study, and any mention of Christianity in the pages that follow will be as an event along with other events in history. The other is that in naming five writers of the present day our only thought is to illustrate what seems to us a fact, namely, that, as just stated, the books on history most widely read at the present time are unfavorable to the Christian religion thought of as an event in history. This means that our interest is in the number of the readers as well as in the contents of the books.

But the question may be asked, Is my statement a fact? If so, and taken in connection with the first fact mentioned of an awakened interest on the part of the average man in history, then the fact is tremendously significant and should be pondered by those interested in the thinking of this generation.

Now, the five books I would mention are these: Bury, *The Idea of Progress*; J. Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*; Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of Western Civilization*; H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*; and Hendrick Van Loon, *The Story of Mankind*. This is a strange assortment of books to bring together. Think of a list of names with Bury at the beginning and Van Loon at the end! Should the objection be made that these names are not representative of the historical profession to-day, the objec-

tion would be valid. But our concern is not with writers whose books are representative of historical scholarship. Rather, the five names are brought together to illustrate the disturbing fact that the above mentioned list of books is unfavorable to Christianity thought of as an outstanding event in history. Our interest is not alone in the quality but also in the popularity of the books. Three of the writers mentioned are trained historians. As they will be dealt with more at length in a later chapter, they will be given only the briefest mention here. The other two may be thought of as journalistic historians who have won a remarkable success with the reading public. Because of this success these books will be considered more carefully and then dismissed from these pages.

Among the books by the trained historians is Bury's book, *The Idea of Progress*. Although published in 1921 it is the book consulted by the countless number of writers on the subject of progress in history. The author is among the most eminent of the living historians. Any book from his pen commands the attention of scholars and is an event in historical circles. Yet the value of this book is lessened by the creation of two historical fictions in the brain of the author—for great scholars are able to do this. One fiction is the inevitable antagonism which he creates between the idea of Providence and the idea of progress; the other, that the idea of progress is a modern idea regardless of the historical fact that in the Christian idea of personality we have the greatest single idea of progress in history.



Robinson's book, *The Mind in the Making*, like Bury's book, is being read widely in academic circles. The upper classmen and the younger members of the faculties of our colleges are likely to test the up-to-dateness of a visitor by asking him if he has read this book. It is more than a clever book; it is a thought-provoking book—the kind of a book that tempts one to make notes on the margin. As this book is dealt with rather sharply in the fourth chapter, it may be simply said here that its radical defect is in stating four sources of influence in the making of the modern mind and failing to mention as a fifth the influence of historical Christianity. That Christ's idea of personality has played no part is simply preposterous.

Spengler's book, *The Decline of Western Civilization*, is the literary sensation in Germany, having gone through many editions, since the first of its two volumes was published in 1917. As yet it is little known in America or England. But it is being translated into English, and there is reason to believe it will receive a wide reading. The work is frankly unchristian, the author denying the existence of absolute truth. For him the words of Christ, "I am the way, the truth and the life," are impossible words.

Of the two books spoken of as journalistic histories, the first and by far the more important is Wells' remarkable book, *The Outline of History*. Something has already been said about the marvelous popularity of this book. The author was quick to sense the change of mind of the reading public regarding history that came with the World War. To criticize

an achievement such as this is not pleasant. Yet there is one aspect of this book that needs to be carefully considered, if for no other reason, because the book has been read by the millions. This aspect is the author's treatment of the three world religions—Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam.

The author's aim is evidently to give us three attractive word pictures of equal beauty and power of these three religions. But is this good history? All three of these religions contain imperishable truth. Any religion that endures for centuries and gains the adherence of millions must possess truth. A study of comparative religion makes this clear. There is no disposition to place Christianity as white over against these other religions as black. The day for that has passed. Christ is reported to have said, "Other sheep have I that are not in this fold." But the question that needs to be asked is whether it is good history? For example, could Wells submit his source material for these three religions? There can be only one answer. To permit these three religions to take shape in the mind as they appear on the pages of Wells is to return to the superficial attitude of mind of the Mediæval Age as illustrated in the cynical story of the three rings.

The last book is that of Van Loon, *The Story of Mankind*. This book must be reckoned with because of its wide reading. Like Wells' much greater book, the chapters appeared as syndicated articles in the newspapers. When it appeared many parents with children of high-school age bought the book and placed it upon the table in the living room, that it

might serve as bait to fasten the children more securely on the hook of learning. But imagine a thoughtful boy or girl reading this book. He takes the title as descriptive of the contents of the book and so believes that in brief outline he is actually reading a story of mankind. As he becomes interested in the book he comes to the first century of the Christian era, and reads five pages in the book of five hundred pages about the supreme event of history, the appearance of Christianity in the person of its founder Jesus Christ. This is spoken of in the five pages as the "Story of Joseph of Nazareth, whom the Greeks called Jesus."<sup>9</sup> But no event in the life is mentioned. Instead the five pages are devoted to a letter from a Roman physician to his nephew in the army inquiring about Jesus and Paul. This letter purports to have been written in the year 62 A. D.

Now, it seems to me, that both author and publisher of a book like this intended for young people have a responsibility beyond that of producing a "best seller." To caricature history in this readable form is serious business. This is said, not because the author's interpretation of Christianity is other than my own, for this is unimportant. The author might have stated his conviction that what purports to be historical Christianity is all a fiction, or that in the light of modern knowledge Christianity is outgrown. He might have said any one of a dozen things that men say. But to assume the position of an historian and indulge in a travesty of an out-

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<sup>9</sup> Hendrik Willem Van Loon. *The Story of Mankind*, Boni & Liveright, publishers. Used by permission.

standing event in history is to totally miss the sense of responsibility which goes with such a position.

Strange, however, as this book is, equally strange is the absence of any criticism on the part of those who would be concerned about the education of the young. Criticisms of the book as a whole have appeared. It has been called "flimsy stuff" and mistakes mentioned. But this central defect, so far as my reading goes, has not been noticed.

One more fact which justifies the discussion undertaken in this book is the connection between the question of the final meaning of history and a fundamental belief of religion.

The fundamental belief, stated in its simplest terms, is that God cares about man. If God cares, then human nature no less than physical nature is the taking shape in time and space of a glorious purpose that exists in the mind of God. In other words, the question of history and its final meaning is but the historical statement of a problem, which in theology is the problem of Divine Providence.<sup>10</sup>

Having dared to mention a religious belief in a work that claims to be historical, a further word needs to be said. This word is that belief in Divine Providence is fundamental in the sense that genuine religion is conditioned upon such belief. It is conceivable that morality might exist without this belief; it is impossible to think of religion apart from such a con-

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<sup>10</sup> There is an exceptionally strong statement of the Christian doctrine of providence in the light of modern knowledge by Douglas Clyde Macintosh. See *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, chap. vii. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

viction. With the possible exception of immortality, it is the belief which those who accept the reality of religion can neither compromise nor surrender. Connected with religion are some beliefs that may be abandoned. There are other beliefs that admit of wide latitude for differences of interpretation. With the belief in the providence of God it is otherwise. To compromise at this point or surrender altogether is to impair the reality of the religious life, for, if God does not care, what is religion worth?

Now, it is of the utmost importance that those who believe in the supreme value of genuine religion should see clearly the connection between this vital religious conviction and the central question of historical interpretation. To say this is not to imply that the historian can furnish religion with the proof for its vital belief. This proof, for the most part, is found elsewhere. Actually, those who strive to live the religious life under the inspiration of this tremendous conviction that God cares find the basis for the conviction in their individual experiences as illumined by a revelation which they accept as divine. And to find such a basis is not as unhistorical as a few of our rather clever historians are prone to think. For human experience is in history, and the outstanding fact of all history is the life and teaching of Christ. But, of this something more later.

All that we desire to emphasize at the moment is that the historian as he asks his question about the final meaning of history does come upon this vital religious conviction. He may, to be sure, fail to answer his question. But certain thoughts will arise

in his mind. He will perceive that history must have a meaning. The assumptions which he holds regarding history and which guide him in his work will make almost inevitable such a thought. Again, he will recognize in history the spiritual as a form of energy, along with the mental and physical forms of energy. Further, because of the assumptions that guide him in his work, and the presence of the spiritual as a form of energy, he will find some indication of a goal toward which history seems to be tending. Finally, he will notice that the spiritual becomes more pronounced as history moves toward its goal. Many of our historians who stress the economic, such as Seligman, have noticed this fact.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps some of my readers are uneasy at this mention of a religious belief in a historical book. Well, to allay such uneasiness let me say that the moment you deal with the spiritual as a form of energy in history you of necessity come upon religious belief. And why the historical student should avoid religious belief any more than he should avoid economic or political belief is not apparent. Still, his approach must be historical rather than theological. To make this clear let me repeat a statement made at the opening of this chapter. There it was said that the task of the historian is not to seek the final meaning of history. His task is to recapture the processes of the past, as he explains the relation of the facts that constitute the events of the past.

The time has passed to think of history as a kind

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<sup>11</sup> E. R. A. Seligman, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, chap. iii, Columbia University Press, publishers.

of secondary Bible to which piously minded people turn under the guidance of historians to find illustrations to buttress their religious beliefs. History is too complex and baffling a thing to yield to any such facile treatment. And it promises to become more complex and difficult as its field in time and place is extended. Seeley, the historian, once remarked, "When I hear a man say, 'History teaches,' I say to myself, 'That man is going to tell a lie,' and he always does." No, the difficulties are such that it is extremely difficult for the historian to-day to furnish proof from the page of history as to its final meaning. These difficulties will be frankly discussed in their proper place.

Nevertheless, the work of the historian like the work of students in other fields, is related to religious belief. His position is precisely that of the astronomer, physicist, biologist, and psychologist. Accepting the scientific method as valid, he seeks to know what a thing does that he may know what a thing is. With the astronomer the things are in the sky; with the physicist they are in the forms of physical energy; with the biologist they are in living things; with the psychologist they are in behavior; and with the historian they are in the events of the past. He simply applies the scientific method to his chosen field of work. But in doing this he discovers that religious beliefs in one form or another, and especially this belief in Divine Providence, impinge upon his work. And, like other thinkers, he is none the less a thinker because he recognizes these beliefs and reacts to them according to his apprehension of the truth.

The astronomer does not detract from the rigor of his particular work, if he finds himself saying, as most of them do, "The heavens declare the glory of God!" The physicist is none the less a trained research worker if, with his marvelous conception of the astronomy of electrons, he adds, as an increasing number are adding in these days, "And the firmament showeth his handiwork." The biologist is still thoroughly scientific, if in the midst of his work, he raises the question of "a grander teleology." The psychologist does not lose his standing if he study the brain as an organ of transmission in its bearing upon the problem of the life beyond. Likewise, the historian who recognizes the relation of historical interpretation to this basic belief of religion can still be a scholar in his chosen field. Rather, this frank recognition of the relation of the scholarly pursuit of truth to the vital convictions of mankind only serves to make such pursuit of truth more human and so more effective.

The facts, then, in the present historical situation which seem to give sanction to the appearance of a book dealing with the spiritual element in history are as follows: An awakened interest on the part of the average reader in general history; an increasing tendency among historical scholars to engage in the work of synthesis as contrasted with the work of analysis; the reluctance of historians to stress the spiritual element to the extent it is being stressed by scientists and philosophers; the existence of books unfavorable to Christianity thought of as an historical event, these books being the most widely read at the present time;



and the importance of the truth of the spiritual element in history because of its relation to a fundamental belief of religion—Divine Providence. Certainly, if the facts have been accurately stated, there is some warrant in asking anew the question about the final meaning of history.

Before this chapter is brought to a close a word should be said about the prospective reader. He has been spoken of as a seasoned reader of serious books making two demands as regards his reading. He demands in the introductory chapter a statement of what the book is about, also a statement that justifies the writing of such a book. An effort has been made to satisfy these demands. Having done this, by giving in brief outline the thought and by presenting certain facts that suggest the timeliness of a discussion of this thought, the question arises, Who are the readers of books who may be expected to be interested in this book?

Among such readers possibly a few of our historians will be found. At least the author cherishes this hope, for he has attempted to interpret the work of historical scholarship to-day. In doing this he has indulged in some criticism. Along with this criticism, however, will be found a recognition of the difficulties that confront the historian to-day as regards the question of history and its final meaning. Nevertheless, as already intimated in this chapter, the conclusion is reached that our historians are not making enough of the spiritual as a form of energy in history. Now, in reading these pages, should some of our his-

torians agree with this conclusion, and accept it as a challenge, then the book will serve a useful purpose.

Still, there are other readers to have in mind. With the fullest appreciation of the far-reaching influence of trained historians in the technical sense, they are not uppermost in our thought. The readers we most desire to interest—and, if possible, help—are on the edge of the circle formed by the historians, or just outside the circle. Think, for example, of the thousands of ministers who from pulpits are influencing the thoughts of the people. Part of the mental background of the message of these leaders of thought consists of historical knowledge, using the term “historical” as distinct from the term “revelation.” Is it true, as Bury states, that there is an antagonism between the idea of Providence and the idea of progress? Is it true, as J. Harvey Robinson tells us, that the modern mind is the result of four influences of the past, not one of which is the Christian Epic? Is it possible to find in history a tendency in the direction of the spiritual as the dominant form of energy? It is only necessary to ask such questions as these to realize the value that a discussion of the spiritual element in history should have for the ministers of religion.

Think, also, of the thousands of teachers in our schools and the opportunity they have of influencing the younger generation, by the teaching of history. Some of these teachers in our high schools, like some of the ministers, are trained historians. But most of them cannot be thought of in this way. They need to-day the inspiration which comes as they catch a

glimpse of the spiritual element in history. Also they need to so understand this truth that they will be able to use it without bringing it in conflict with the best of modern thought.

Of the many illustrations let us select one that shows the need of stressing the spiritual element in history. To-day, in unfolding the story of the development of the United States as a nation, teachers in our academies and high schools are guided by the material in the textbooks. Now, it is a commonplace thought among historical scholars that the spiritual element has played a tremendous part in our growth as a nation. But, as far as my knowledge goes there is not a textbook (and I have examined many of them) written by a first-class historian, and used in our schools, that gives serious consideration to the spiritual element in our history. This is an amazing fact, and as disturbing as it is amazing, for it means that our young people as regards the teaching of history are receiving an utterly distorted conception of our national development.

This is a serious situation. Let us also frankly admit that it is an exceedingly difficult situation. Our population is heterogeneous. The public schools are the creation of the state, and distinct from the church. The publisher as well as the author of a textbook must be considered. Probably it is no exaggeration to say that should a manuscript be prepared by an historical scholar in which adequate recognition is given the spiritual, along with the economic and mental, the manuscript would fail of publication for want of a publisher.

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There are other readers to have in mind along with a few of the historians and the many ministers and teachers. These are the thoughtful people found in every community who constitute the remnant. Such people in their own way are philosophers, psychologists, scientists, and historians, for it is not altogether fanciful to believe that when these thoughtful people ask "Why?" they are philosophers; when they ask "How?" they are psychologists; when they ask "What?" they are scientists; and when they ask "What?" and "How?" that they may answer, "Why?" they are historians. The farmer friend of Whittier, spoken of earlier in this chapter, who discovered that "Mr. Plato had some of his ideas," was a philosopher although unconscious of the fact.

## CHAPTER I

### WHY? THE MEANING

WHY is history? The answers to this question are many. From the days of Herodotus, the Father of History, until our own times thinkers have dealt with this question. These answers constitute the philosophy of history. For imposing as seems this term, "the philosophy of history," it simply means the thoughtful consideration of history.

But the answers to the question, Why? as given by the historians of antiquity—by Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Livy, and Tacitus, lack certain assumptions that are considered fundamental as history is understood to-day. This, of course, does not mean that the work of these ancient historians has ceased to have value. Such a statement would be crass indeed. For there are modern historians who are prepared to defend the proposition that the *Peloponnesian War* of Thucydides is a model in history as the Parthenon of Ictinus is a model in architecture. Other historical scholars in these days speak of Polybius as the historian's historian for his age, as Ranke is the historian's historian in the nineteenth century. A glance at any recently written history of the ancient world quickly will reveal our dependence upon these early historians. All that is meant is that, priceless as may be their answers to the What? there is little of interest in their answers to the Why? Not

until antiquity with its mythological interpretation is left behind and the Christian era is entered, are answers to the Why? given that have meaning for the modern mind. This is said notwithstanding a temporary recrudescence of interest in the cyclical theory of history, which will be considered in a later chapter.

These answers, other than those given by the historians of the ancient world, are three in number. This may seem to contradict the statement made in the opening sentence that the answers are many. The contradiction, however, is only apparent. For, although the answers to the question, Why? are many, they may be brought together under a threefold classification. Under such a classification the answers are: history is from above; history is from within; history is from below. The controlling energy in history is spiritual, intellectual, or physical. These answers are associated with three names—Augustine, Hegel, and Marx. Others have given these answers, but the three thinkers named have formally and at considerable length stated their answers to the question, Why is history? The student who informs himself of the answers as unfolded by these thinkers will have in his possession the substance of all that has been said in reply to the question, Why? Let us briefly state these answers.

The first is the answer of Augustine in his *City of God*. A reading of this famous work will require some patience and not a little of historic imagination, for the pages are many and contain much that in the

light of modern conditions seems outgrown and even irrelevant. The gold is here in the ore, but when extracted much slag remains. To extract this gold and thus secure Augustine's answer, it is necessary to remember that this great work was produced as a reply to an accusation made against Christianity after the capture of Rome by Alaric. It was the familiar, "I told you so" charge and stated as follows: The old religion of the Romans was superior to the new religion of the Christians. Had the old religion not been supplanted by this new and inferior religion, Rome would have resisted the attacks of the Goth, and continued a world power.

Augustine's answer to this accusation is that the fall of Rome, stupendous as a fact of history, is but part of a large and glorious plan in the mind of God. To make clear the meaning of this transcendent plan he employs the literary device of the two cities as symbols of the two forces in history. Rome is the symbol of that which is worldly and temporal; the City of God is the symbol of that which is spiritual and eternal. These two forces are sometimes in opposition as darkness and light. Again, he says, the worldly and temporal prepare the way for the spiritual and eternal, as the gray streamers of light in the east announce the coming of the sun on the sky line. All history—and this is his thought—whether it is temporal and worldly, or spiritual and eternal, is embraced in a divine plan. There is nothing fortuitous in the universe, even down to the flutter of the last leaf. Its history is being written, as it always has been and always will be, from above and by God.

Man consciously and unconsciously, voluntarily and involuntarily is the agent for something vaster and more glorious than himself. And that something is the realization of the holy and loving will of God in time and eternity. Or, to state his thought in the closing words of Paul's argument for a philosophy of history, in the Epistle to the Romans, "For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things."<sup>1</sup> Such in a few words is the first of the answers to the question, Why?

The second answer is found in Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. The German philosopher's name is not one to conjure with in these days. Many of us are afraid of him, and with reason, for he is not always easy reading. Some training in philosophy is needed, at least familiarity with his use of terms. Even then he is easily misunderstood. He is reported on his deathbed to have said, "One man has understood me, and even he has not." In this respect he has an advantage over Einstein, who in the Preface to his book, entitled, *The Special and General Theory of Relativity*, expresses the hope that "this book may bring some one a few happy hours of suggestive thought." Possibly there was a gleam of gentle humor in the eye of the mathematician as he wrote these words. At least let us assume this, although we can never be sure about some of these German scholars. But Hegel, be it said, knew and admitted that he was difficult reading. There is, however, one exception, namely, his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. After the reader has become

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 11. 36.



familiar with his use of terms in the Introduction, the pages are found to be anything but heavy. In fact, because of many brilliant generalizations, the reading is pleasant and suggestive.

Yet, brilliant and stimulating as these pages are, the reader is easily misled. The reason for this is that Hegel gives to certain significant words an unusual meaning. He carries out into the field of history the tools from his workshop of philosophy. And some of these tools were made by himself. Read the Introduction, and this is all that need be read, in order to understand him, and you constantly meet with the words, "Idea," "Spirit," "Will," and "Freedom." But with the exception of his use of the word Idea, he gives to these words a meaning not given to them by the ordinary reader. Perhaps the statement is not unjust to Hegel, that his language is on a higher level than his actual thought. He seems to promise something profoundly spiritual, and furnishes something less than the spiritual. As you read him for the first time the impression is that his interpretation of history is essentially like the interpretation of Augustine. But as you read him again, and examine carefully his use of terms, you reach the conclusion that what he really means is that the determining factor in history is man and the mental processes inside man.

He, to be sure, says, "As Nature is the development of the Idea in space, so History is the development of the Idea in time."<sup>2</sup> Again, in the oft-quoted words:

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<sup>2</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 72 (Silbree translation).

"All that is real is rational; and all that is rational is real." But when he comes to close quarters with history—and this he rarely does—what he finds is not the Idea in the universe, but ideas in the minds of men. Because of these ideas he thinks he finds development and progress in history. These are found in government that begins with despotism, passes to democracy, then to aristocracy, and culminates in monarchy. The story of this development and progress he reads in the lives of great men who constitute the motor power of history. "If," he says, "we wish to gain the general idea and conception of what the Greeks were, we find it in Sophocles and Aristophanes, in Thucydides and Plato."<sup>3</sup> Such, briefly stated, is Hegel's answer to the question, Why is history? Augustine said it is something from above and spiritual. He says it is something from within and intellectual.

A third answer is given by Karl Marx. Unlike the answer of Hegel, this answer is easily understood. But, if readily understood, the answer is found with some difficulty. One reason for this is that there is no single work from the pen of Marx, such as Augustine's *City of God* and Hegel's *Lectures*, that formally embodies his philosophy of history. His interest was in the social reorganization of society along socialistic lines. In developing his scheme in his own mind he came upon what he believed to be the true philosophy of history, namely, the materialistic or economic. But in his writings he everywhere assumes this, and only occasionally states his philosophy. As a result

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

many pages of his writings must be turned to come upon a single expression of his theory.”<sup>4</sup>

Another reason is that his pages are anything but easy reading. They suggest stretches of sage brush on the prairie rather than glimpses of landscape varied in aspect. It is true that his great work entitled *Capital*, in three huge volumes, is called in Europe the “Bible of the Working Class.” A guess may be hazarded, however, that the man who first gave this name to *Capital*, had never waded through its many pages. Trained economists, as part of their discipline, probably do, as theologians do with Calvin’s *Institutes*, read it once and then exclaim, “Never again!” The name of Marx is one to conjure with in these days, and it is a name to start many and diverse spirits; but it does its work, as regards historical interpretation, from the notes at the bottom of the page, and not from the message on the page itself.

This answer of Marx having been found and compared with the answers of Augustine and Hegel, a contrast sharp and decisive is noted. There are pages in Hegel suggesting the spirituality of Augustine’s conception of history. In Augustine’s there are pages suggesting the rationality of Hegel’s conception of history. But there are no pages in Marx that suggest anything in either of the others. Over against Augustine’s spiritual answer Marx places his ma-

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<sup>4</sup> *The Economic Interpretation of History*, by Seligman (Columbia University Press), is a critical, yet sympathetic discussion of Marx’s theory of history. One who reads this rather small book will have in his possession the substance of all that Marx said

terialistic answer. If the Bishop of Hippo wrote with the sky above him, at which he longingly gazed, the Social Reformer wrote with the earth under his feet, at which he steadily looked. For his life was a frank disavowal of all untouched by the hand and unseen by the eye. But his conscious antagonism was reserved for Hegel. He had been a pupil of the great philosopher, and retained his dialectical method to demolish, as he believed, his teacher's philosophy of history.

For example, he believed that Hegel's doctrine of the rational and real was the essence of unreality. Nature, he declared, shaped man's ideas, instead of man's ideas shaping Nature as used by man. History, he believed, was a working out of Nature's inexorable law. All forms of action in society—social, political, religious—are effects produced by a fundamental cause—Nature. "The necessity," he tells us, "for predicting the rise and fall of the Nile created Egyptian astronomy, and with it the dominion of the priests as the directors of agriculture." He has much to say about "technical wants and their effect upon history." By such wants he means those arising because of man's material needs and which are met by some form of production and transportation. For Marx concerned himself with the economic rather than the purely natural aspect of the physical in its effect upon history. He asserts that in history, "the handmill produces the feudal lord; the steam mill produces the industrial capitalist." Again, he affirms that "a technical want felt by society is more of an impetus to society than ten universities." In this

affirmation he reminds us of Rabelais, who said that "the belly is the mother of arts and sciences." There is something relentless and rigorous about his thinking, and so one need never be in doubt about his meaning. Perhaps the best single statement of his answer to the Why? is in the words of another of his teachers, Feuerbach, that "man is the creature of his appetite not his intellect." If so, then his answer to the question, Why? is unlike the answers given by Augustine and Hegel. Augustine said history is from above and spiritual; Hegel said it is from within and intellectual; Marx says it is from below and physical. Such are the three answers.

Originality is not claimed for these answers. Clear-cut, original and creative thought belongs not to man. The saying of Scripture, "One soweth and another reapeth," is true in the realm of thought as in the realm of moral action. The nearest approach to originality that can be claimed for any man is that he is the first to give formal utterance or concrete embodiment to an idea. Those who are interested and think it worth while can probably move backward from every striking achievement to an idea or ideas that flickered long before. The steam engine of Newcomen on the page of Francis Bacon; the æroplane of the Wright Brothers in the note books of Leonardo; Darwin's explanation of evolution in the utterances of Anaximander; and the central thought of the Declaration of Independence in the words of Marsiglio of Padua. So with these thinkers and their answers to the Why? No one of them was the

first to express the idea that is dominant in his answer.

Marx found his answer in the play of economic forces as based upon Nature, which he believed determined the direction of events in history. But thinkers before Marx saw in Nature an influence to be reckoned with in historical interpretation. Much on the pages of Herodotus has to do with geography. Lucretius, in his famous fifth book *Of the Nature of Things*, relates man's achievement to physical agencies. Montesquieu devotes five books of his *Spirit of the Laws* to the effect of climate upon society. The Belgian statistician, Quetelet, some time before *Capital* was written, developed the statistical method. More important than any name mentioned was the impalpable, yet real, presence of the awakened scientific spirit, also the pressure of the industrial revolution, which drove Marx, as it has driven others, to a more careful consideration of material agencies.

The answer as given by Hegel was in terms of the Idea. All history, as has been stated, was for him rational, meaning thereby that all history was the product of thought. Its progress could be traced, as he fancifully supposed, from the East to the West, in despotism, democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy. The order of the progress is interesting—democracy a lower form and monarchy a higher form. But it is well to remember that Hegel lived in that wonderful period of German life when the reaction from the depression of Napoleonic days was in full swing. This enables us to understand the facetious remark that Hegel mistook the kingdom of Prussia for the

kingdom of heaven. Yet, the central thought in his answer to the Why? was in the air even as the answer of Marx was in the air a generation later. A reading of Kant, Herder, and Fichte will show this. Or, if one chooses to go back a century earlier, he will find the thought on the pages of Vico. But, unlike the writings of the German thinkers mentioned, what the Italian philosopher wrote attracted no attention at the time.<sup>5</sup>

And Augustine said the answer to the Why? was in the spiritual. Probably he was less influenced by other thinkers than either Hegel or Marx. Clear traces of the influence of Greek thought, especially the influence of Plotinus, is found in his strictly theological writings. But there is no evidence of his being influenced by Plotinus in writing his *City of God*. Some of the rough material for the building of his *City of God* may be found in Eusebius, the "Father of Church History," who furnished him with the "Chronicle." Possibly Origen, the "rationalist of the supernatural," exerted some influence upon his thought, for it is known that Origen had the thought of the pagan and Christian world as embraced in the plan of God, which Augustine expresses in the literary symbols of the two cities. It is, moreover, entirely reasonable to suppose that the argument of Paul in certain chapters of the Epistle to the Romans played a part in shaping his thought. But, whatever literary

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<sup>5</sup> His great work, *The New Science*, has not been translated. There is, however, in translation a scholarly and interesting study of Vico by Benedetto Croce. The title of the book is *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*.

influences reached him, like Hegel and Marx, the pressure of the actual world called forth his answer—a world that seemed crashing down into ruins as Rome fell under the blows of Alaric.

If, however, strict originality in the answers given must be denied these thinkers, their position as pioneers in the field of historical study is undoubted. This pioneer element is more easily detected in Augustine and Marx than in Hegel. Probably he was less a pioneer than either the African Bishop or the Prophet of the Social Order. He was a philosopher in the academic sense and never anything else, although a profound philosopher. There is, it must be admitted, no evidence of moral passion, of devotion to a difficult cause that demanded sacrifice. In fact, there is evidence pointing the other way. Like Homer, he seems to have had one language for the gods and another language for men. McGiffert says, "In how far he was sincere in his claim, or in how far he was influenced by the desire to commend his philosophy to men of conservative tendencies, it is impossible to say."<sup>6</sup> This is a serious comment to make. If it means anything, it means that Hegel was disingenuous.

While the conditions under which he did his work must be understood in order to measure the justness of this criticism, yet a reading of his *Lectures* at least creates in the mind the suspicion that Hegel at times indulged in mere exercitation. Having said this, it is well to remember, however, the effect of these

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\* A. C. McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 100. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



*Lectures* upon historical study. McGiffert, in the volume quoted gives (and it is given by others) to Hegel the credit for creating the enthusiasm for research that came in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Abundant evidence exists in the note books and biographies of the times, to prove that a new era dawned for historical interpretation, with the delivery of these brilliant lectures. Because of this, Hegel must be considered a pioneer.

Marx also was a pioneer, although in a different way. His writings, unlike those of Hegel, awaken no suspicion of mere exercitation. Neither is there any suggestion of ambiguity in his language for the sake of ambiguity. He possessed a powerful personality and sought to impress himself upon men as a leader. The tough fibers of the real pioneer eager to blaze a trail and willing to suffer hardship in the blazing were in his character. His career was an illustration of Cromwell's words, that "he goes farthest, who knows not whither he goes." For Marx was constantly going forth, and usually under compulsion. The governments of Europe respected him so much that they feared him, and some of them desired his presence elsewhere. Yet amid the vicissitudes of a life which was often tumultuous he remained loyal to the cause of the Workers. But, apart from this personal and heroic devotion to the interests of the less favored, he rendered a service, the value of which was not appreciated at the time. As Benedetto Croce says: "Marx took socialism as a Utopia and made it a science. He predicted a new era with the proletariat

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

supreme, but attributed it to historical necessity."<sup>8</sup> This is strong testimony, coming as it does from a modern thinker who finds in Marx little to commend.

The snapper, however, on the whip of Croce's statement, is in the last two words—"historical necessity." For these words suggest that, pronounced as is the influence of Marx upon Socialism, even more pronounced is his influence in the field of historical study, due to his economic theory as based upon "historical necessity." As a prophet, Marx, like many another great man in history, was a failure. Compare him, for example, with Abraham Lincoln, who shifted his position on slavery four times in six years, because of the emergence of conditions he could not foresee. So with Marx. Just ahead of him were two movements neither of which he saw or could see. One, the shift of emphasis from the theory of government as a necessary evil to the theory of government as a positive good. The other, the rise of trade unionism. Through these movements the cause of the Worker was advanced and Socialism compelled to take a direction not predicted by its leaders. The story of the labor movement during the last generation either in England or the United States shows this change, but in the wider field of historical study the influence of Marx continues to this day. For, if Hegel awakened the enthusiasm for historical research during the first half of the nineteenth century, Marx, more than any other thinker in modern times, determined the course which this study should take

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<sup>8</sup> Benedetto Croce, *On History*, p. 267. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers.

during the years since. A glance at the mass of historical writing will show that his answer to the Why? is the one uppermost in the minds of a large number of historical students to-day. Because of this Marx was a pioneer.

But Augustine and his *City of God*—what shall we say about him and his work? Measured by time his great treatise belongs to a period far removed from our modern world. Fourteen hundred and more years separate his answer to the Why? from the answers given by Hegel and Marx. Was he in his far-away day a pioneer in the field of history even as the other two in recent days? More important still, is his spiritual answer one to be reckoned with in our day along with the physical and intellectual answers of the two thinkers mentioned? These are questions needing careful consideration and requiring somewhat ample treatment, because, as we shall see later, the spiritual interpretation is being accepted if not by historians, certainly by an increasing number of philosophers and scientists. Further—and this is a strange fact—many historical writers in our day seem oblivious of any such thing as a spiritual interpretation, and as regards Augustine, either challenge his right to be counted among the pioneers or ignore altogether his right to this position.

Before attempting to answer these questions let us notice a fact about the personality of Augustine. While our interest in him and the other two is primarily with their thoughts about history, yet their personalities have some interest for us. Now, this suggests an interesting and significant fact, namely,

that the personality of Augustine is the one of the three standing out most vividly. Notwithstanding his distance in time he is nearer in reality. Seek to draw in the mind a mental portrait of each of these three characters, and the lines in the portrait of Augustine will be clearer and deeper than the lines in the portrait of either Hegel or Marx.

A partial explanation of this fact is that Augustine was a character of more huge proportions and so fills a larger place in history. The towering mountain peak, although farther away than the hill in the foreground, will loom greater because of its massive proportions. So Augustine in comparison with Marx and Hegel is seen more vividly. Another explanation is that he left behind a luminous revelation of himself in his *Confessions*. These have been read by the thoughtful since his day, and will be read as long as man is interested in the story of personality. There is nothing like this revelation connected with either of the other lives. A further explanation, and probably the most adequate, is that in his writings, including his masterpiece the *City of God*, Augustine probes more deeply into the meaning of life than either Hegel or Marx. There are occasional pages in his great historical work which are untouched by time. On these pages are thoughts which possess a magical power and start bells ringing in the recesses of aspiring souls. As Sir Thomas Browne would say, here is afforded "a glimpse of incomprehensibles, and thoughts of things that thoughts but tenderly touch."<sup>9</sup> Because of this there is an appeal in the writings of

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<sup>9</sup> Sir Thomas Browne, *Christian Morals*, part iii, sec. 14.

Augustine not found in the pages of the two modern thinkers.

Yet, commanding as the personality of Augustine is, it is well to remember that our interest in him has to do with the question, Why is history? What we want to know is whether in the *City of God* he has given an answer of enough importance to entitle him to a place as a pioneer in historical study along with Hegel and Marx? Those who study history, of course, know that the *City of God* is a notable creation of the mind. To say this, however, is to say little that has meaning in relation to our question. What interests us is his answer to the Why? and the value of this answer as a clue to history.

Now, the historians of our day, other than those interested in ecclesiastical history, who see in Augustine's answer any real contribution to historical interpretation, are few indeed. To be sure, in dealing with the age in which he lived, some of them mention his great work and all of them call him by name. They name him because as historians they cannot get out of the fourth century and into the fifth century without encountering him, for he stands forth as a mental and moral giant who casts a long shadow athwart the earth. But, having called him by name and having offered him a passing tribute, most of these historians proceed to ignore him. They do this for a reason other than the fact that he belongs to a distant age—having lived fifteen centuries ago—for these historians are interested in history that antedates the fifth century. Their pages reveal an awakened interest in the prehistoric era, owing to the fruit-

ful activity in the field of anthropology; an increased attention to the early historic times, due to the remarkable finds of archæologists and a growing appreciation of the historians of antiquity—Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Tacitus, and Livy. In fact, a striking characteristic of modern historical scholarship is its interest in times remote. When, however, the early centuries of the Christian era are reached, with the *City of God* as its outstanding historical creation, the recognition from most of our historians is scant. At this point avid interest gives way to negative criticism. Why this change? The answer is in the single word "theological." Augustine's work, so these scholars inform us, is theological rather than historical.

Well, let us grant at once that this criticism is valid, for the pages of the *City of God* are pretty well loaded with theology. Much of this theology has little or no meaning for our day. For example, notice the amount of space devoted to a discussion of the pagan gods. This question of pagan gods was significant enough in the fifth century, but it has no meaning for our century. Moreover, the theology is inextricably mixed with the history on the pages of this great work. Doubtless this inextricable mixture of theology and history is disconcerting to some of our historians, especially to those historians whose grip on history seems to loosen when they meet with theology as a phase of thought and so a part of history. In this respect, however, Augustine is like Hegel and Marx. Eliminate the philosophy from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, and

not much is left. As someone has facetiously remarked, "the trouble with Hegel's philosophy of history is the history." Read Marx, whether in his occasional essays, his leading work, *Capital*, or in his posthumous writings as edited by Engel and others, and what you find is his economic theory of history interwoven with an interminable discussion of "surplus values." Yet these thinkers made their contributions to historical interpretation as they answered the Why? So with Augustine. He mixed theology with history, but in the mixture he gave an answer to the Why?

The criticism, however, by our present-day historians, takes a wider sweep and includes the entire Christian era. They largely ignore this era because, as they affirm, historical work was decadent. From this the inference is drawn that nothing of historical value came from this era. This being so, of course the masterpiece of Augustine has no value for history. One of the ablest of our historians, Shotwell, in discussing the causes for this decadence laments the fact that following the appearance of the supreme event—the rise of Christianity—there was no Herodotus or Polybius at hand to write the history. He then dwells upon three conditions of early Christianity which he thinks explain the absence of first-class historians in this era. These conditions are: the humble beginning of the Christian religion, its followers recruited largely from the ranks of the poor and unlearned; the presentation of the new religion as a divine revelation, and so its demand upon faith; and the attention of those who accepted the new religion was cen-

tered upon the world beyond instead of upon this world.<sup>10</sup>

This scholar evidently attaches the most importance to the third of these conditions, that is, attention centered upon the world beyond, for he discusses it at greater length. Yet, it seems to me, he has not quite caught the meaning of this doctrine of the world beyond in its relation to history. His statement of the widespread prevalence of this belief in the early years of the Christian era admits of no doubt, although the importance attached to this belief by Harnack, whom he quotes, is probably overstated. For, it is well to remember, that believers in these early centuries felt the insistent pressure of the present with its duties at least as much as they felt the glow of the future with its hope. But, whatever may have been the importance of this doctrine regarding the unseen world, two facts should be kept in mind. One is that the effect of this cardinal belief of the Christian religion upon the undisciplined minds of the many would be unlike the effect upon the disciplined minds of the few—such as the mind of Augustine. The other fact is that by the beginning of the fifth century, that is, at the time the *City of God* was

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<sup>10</sup> James T. Shotwell, *Introduction to the History of History*, sec. v, chap. xxiv. This volume along with Shotwell's brilliant essay, "The Interpretation of History," which first appeared in 1913 in the *American Historical Review*, but is now reprinted as the closing chapter of his *Introduction to the History of History*, should be read. I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to this scholarly, challenging and reverent writer, whose conclusions I sometimes reject, but whose arguments I always ponder with care and profit.



written, this belief in the unseen world had become less intense, having lost something of its restless and nostalgic spirituality. The pages of Augustine furnish evidence of this change.

Yet, having called attention to these two facts, it nevertheless remains true that in these early centuries of the Christian era historical study was decadent. The student searches in vain for an historian comparable with the great historians in the era of antiquity; that is, he searches in vain if historical writing be considered solely as an art and a science. Augustine's masterpiece is beyond doubt the outstanding historical work of the few centuries following the appearance of Christ. Yet, compare it with the *Peloponnesian War* of Thucydides as art, or with the *Histories* of Polybius as historical science. Read a page of Thucydides and then a page of Augustine. On the page of the Athenian, as Cicero said, "he almost equals the number of his words by the number of his thoughts,"<sup>11</sup> and the events are so placed in juxtaposition as to produce a superb dramatic effect. On the page of the Church Father, while there are passages among the noblest in literature, they are interspersed with passages which reveal a dallying prolixity. Examine one of the books of the *Histories* and then a book of the *City of God*. The Greek who lived five hundred years earlier, traversed the Roman Empire that he might verify his facts, and by his rigorous use of source material, wrote history in a way unknown to the Christian bishop. Yes, measured by either art or science, it must be admitted

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<sup>11</sup> Cicero, *An Orator*, book II, chap. xiii.

that the historical work of Augustine, as compared with the work of these great historians of the antique world, shows deterioration.

Still, there is something in the *City of God* not found in the writings of the Greek historians mentioned, and not found in the writings of any of the historians of antiquity. Augustine's theology may be mixed with the history, and the history itself considered as art and science may be on a lower level than the history of the Greeks. Nevertheless, through this mixture of history and theology, and across some flat stretches of rather poor history, a fresh wind is stirring like a wind from off the sea, blowing through the pines and across level sands; that is, there is a suggestion of something vaster and deeper than anything found in antiquity. Moreover, the student who passes from the pages of Thucydides and Polybius to the pages of Augustine will notice this change—or, better still, will feel the change. Like the traveler from the inland region, who as he draws near the coast detects the tang of the salt in the air and knows that the ocean is near at hand, so the reader feels a change in these pages and knows that something stupendous has come into Augustine's world.

This something is the supreme event—Christianity. Central in this event is the doctrine of personality. This doctrine gives to Augustine a philosophy of history, which he unfolds on the pages of the *City of God*, for, as he attempts to give this mighty event its proper setting, history of necessity assumes a new meaning. The result is, he abandons the Greek idea of history moving in circles—the idea of “yesterday

forever," as Spengler would say, and declares that *history is a progressive revelation of the will of God, through the presence of spiritual power operative in human personalities, which for their development demand time and eternity.* He may have slipped backward in the technique of historical writing, but he moved forward as an historian in the apprehension of truth, for he came upon a truth unknown to the wisest of the Greek historians, namely, the truth of progress in history. Such progress, however, is possible, because the dominant force in history is neither physical nor intellectual, but spiritual. This is Augustine's answer to the Why? Having given this answer he is among the pioneers in the field of historical interpretation.

Now, this conception of progress, conditioned upon the presence in life of spiritual power, which first emerges as part of a formal philosophy of history in the pages of the *City of God*, will be considered more at length, along with other conceptions of progress, in a later chapter, for this question of progress is of vital importance, especially to those who believe in the spiritual interpretation of history. Before leaving the subject, however, the attitude of many of our living historians should be noted. A generation ago scholars had no difficulty in recognizing the pioneer element in Augustine's work, because of his formulation of a doctrine of progress. As Flint said: "Before him, [Augustine] thinkers had no clear conception of progress or the laws of progress."<sup>12</sup> To-day it is

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History*, p. 30. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

otherwise. Some of our ablest historians simply miss this great thought in the work of Augustine. This is explained, as suggested in a foregoing paragraph, by the undue emphasis which these scholars place upon Augustine's doctrine of the unseen world. In the attempt to create the historical background of the early centuries of the Christian era with its dominant thoughts they fail to see the actual foreground with its innumerable duties. But, as will be shown later, there is nothing in the Christian doctrine of eternal progress in the world beyond that necessarily militates against a belief in human progress in this world. On the contrary, the reaction of such a doctrine upon human living should be favorable to progress on this earth. For the doctrine may be the issue of a working faith, that is, of a faith so potent that it changes for the better the conditions in this world.

Others of our historians who interest themselves in this doctrine of progress ignore altogether Christianity. They tell us the doctrine is modern, only about three hundred years old. The reason for its late arrival, as they inform us, is that during the earlier centuries a doctrine of Providence dominated the minds of men and made impossible a belief in progress. When, however, the incubus of this false doctrine of Providence was removed, then belief in progress appeared. Among the scholars who explain the belief in this way, probably the most influential, is J. B. Bury. A glance at the popular literature on the subject of progress will show the extent to which writers have drawn upon Bury's fascinating book entitled *The Idea of Progress*. Now, this learned his-

torian in the opening chapter of his book blandly says, "It may surprise many to be told that the notion of progress, which now seems so easy to apprehend, is of comparatively recent origin."<sup>13</sup> By "comparatively recent origin," as a further reading of the book will indicate, he means the sixteenth century. Later, in the same chapter he says: "So long as the doctrine of Providence was indisputably in the ascendant a doctrine of progress could not arise. And the doctrine of providence, as it was developed in Augustine's *City of God*, controlled the thought of the Middle Ages."<sup>14</sup>

What is to be said about such statements by one of the most eminent historians of our day? Is it sound history to present the idea of progress in this relation to the doctrine of providence? Has this historian in his attempt to explain, failed to understand, and so has created a false antithesis between providence and progress? As regards Augustine, perhaps all needing to be said, is to recall with slight variation a Scotch maxim to the effect that an ounce of fact in history is worth a pound of theory about history. One fact is that a doctrine of progress is found in the *City of God*.<sup>15</sup> Another fact is, that a doctrine of providence is also found in the same work. Still a third fact is, that in the mind of Augustine one doctrine is not incompatible with the other doctrine. To

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<sup>13</sup> J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, pp. 6, 7. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>15</sup> For Augustine's use of term, "progress," see, *City of God*, book vii; also for his discussion of the Greek cyclical theory of history which Augustine rejects, see *City of God*, chap. xii.

be sure, neither the doctrine of progress nor the doctrine of providence is given by Augustine in a form satisfying to the modern man who accepts the spiritual interpretation of history. Nevertheless, both doctrines are there. Had Bury said that there is a modern doctrine of progress unlike the doctrine of progress held in the earlier centuries, he would have stated a fact. When, however, he wrote as he did, I venture to say, that he lifted his eye from the page of history while he indulged in mere speculation about history—possibly influenced by a touch of prejudice against any attempt to evaluate the spiritual as a force in the making of history.

So much for our use of the term “pioneer,” as applied to Augustine, Hegel and Marx. Each of them so answered the Why? as to furnish a philosophy of history. If the answer of Augustine has received more of our attention than the answers of the other two, it is because, as mentioned, his position either is challenged or ignored.

Another thought about these thinkers is, that their answers to the Why? have exerted a far-reaching influence upon historical writing. Think of the magistral Augustine. There is something awesome in the thought that his *City of God* has been as a masterful hand laid upon many of the imperial intellects of history. Bury, in the words quoted in a former paragraph, says, “And the doctrine of Providence, as it was developed in Augustine’s *City of God*, controlled the thought of the Middle Ages.” This is strong language, but true. A study of Dante, Luther,

Calvin, and Bossuet, will reveal this hand as it guides their ample minds. The pressure of this hand has been lessened and can never again rest as heavily upon man's intellect, for there is much in the *City of God* belonging to yesterday. His chronology of history based upon the *Chronicle* of Eusebius; his statement of divine, miraculous intervention as part of the doctrine of Providence; his identification of the church, an institution, with the kingdom of heaven, a spiritual reality, which helped to prepare the way for the Holy Roman Empire—these ideas belong to yesterday.

More than any of these things, much of Augustine belongs to yesterday, because of a harsh conception of life. A single illustration will suffice: He says, "For as the beauty of a picture is increased by well-managed shadows, so, to the eye that has skill to discern it, the universe is beautified even by sinners, though, considered by themselves, their deformity is a sad blemish."<sup>16</sup> There may have been light in Augustine's mind as he wrote these words, but it is light coming in through a northern window, not sunlight that floods a room having a southern exposure. Those who find the clue to history in the spiritual interpretation have moved beyond this conception. They have moved beyond this, by moving back of Augustine to One greater. Finding this greater One, they believe that he could never have uttered such words.

Lest, however, we make too much of the discarded elements in this great work, it is well to remember that in his conception of history there is something sur-

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<sup>16</sup> *City of God*, book xi, section 23.

prisingly modern about Augustine.<sup>17</sup> The thought of history as a vast unified whole; also the thought of the spiritual as the deepest and most dominant element in history, belong to our day. These are thoughts that harmonize with thoughts being expressed by thinkers in other fields of study. Moreover, there is an increasing number of forward-looking people who believe that in the days ahead these noble thoughts of Augustine will have to be reckoned with in any thoroughgoing answer to the Why?

The influence of Hegel also has been widely felt. His recognition came quickly. In the field of ecclesiastical history his influence was seen in the sensational work of Strauss, entitled, *Leben Jesu*. This was an interpretation of Christ based upon the assumption that the miracles and all which seemed supernatural in the Gospels, was a mere embodiment of the idea of the Messiah current in the early Christian communities. About the same time that Strauss was attracting attention, Ranke in the wider field of history was coming to the front with his theory of the *Zeitgeist*. He was a trained historian, whereas Hegel was a philosopher. His method was inductive and much more rigorous in dealing with historical ma-

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<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to notice that in the recent "Fundamentalist" controversy, such scientists as Robert A. Milliken, the physicist, and Henry Fairfield Osborn, the zoologist, have been quoting him. Milliken quotes him to show that he believed with "entire distinctness . . . of the two great lines of thought, the natural and spiritual." See *A Scientist Confesses His Faith*, Milliken, p. 5. Osborn quotes him as "holding a thoroughly modern theistic conception of evolution." See *Evolution and Religion*, Osborn, p. 13. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers,



terial than was the method of Hegel. But his treatment of the Idea as the clue to the interpretation of a period in history, was thoroughly Hegelian. Also Carlyle, unlike either Strauss or Ranke, needs to be mentioned, for he used Hegel's Idea as applied to great men, which he expressed in a brilliant and mordantly vivid literature. Much of his work in history has not withstood the test of a more exact scholarship, for example, his *Life of Frederick the Great*. Yet those familiar with history as written in the last century recognize in his unique writing a widespread influence. Another name is that of Comte. He was a contemporary of Hegel and seems to have reached his conclusions independently. Yet he had a large following for a time among historical students because of the central thought in his philosophy which was similar to the thought of Hegel. This central thought was that between the social phenomena of a given period in history and the intellectual state of society in that period there is a correspondence. This, of course, is Hegel's conception of history as controlled by ideas.

Marked as was the influence of Hegel upon the historians of the nineteenth century, it is quite as marked upon a group of historical writers in our own day. This is seen in the fact that these writers stress the intellectual as a cure for the ills of life. They do not see the kingdom of heaven near at hand and under the banner of Prussia, as Hegel thought he saw it. But it need not be far away, and may be realized if only human beings will know more. The oft-quoted saying of the versatile H. G. Wells, that the history

of the future is "a race between education and catastrophe," is an illustration. Also the view of J. Harvey Robinson, who sees in thought as fortified by the findings of science the hope of the future. This clever and stimulating writer seems pretty sure about many things.<sup>18</sup> Among our present-day writers Benedetto Croce is the one, however, who is following most deliberately in the footsteps of Hegel. He even believes that he has carried the Hegelian tradition a step further, for he closes his recent suggestive and widely read book entitled *On History* with these words: "But we are able to say so, for we have overcome the abstractions of Hegelianism."<sup>19</sup> Yet, a reading of the book fails to disclose wherein Croce has made the meaning of history more concrete than Hegel.

Likewise, the effect of Marx's theory upon the interpretation of history has been pronounced. He has exerted and continues to exert an influence more potent than many of us realize, and in a direction that few of us think about. Of a famous preacher in the

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<sup>18</sup> This writer and others of his group will be considered more at length in chapter iv, when the question of progress as an assumption of history is discussed. They are following in the footsteps of Hegel, only in the sense that they stress the intellectual as the clue to progress. For example, Bury says, "Most thinkers agree now that the chief clues to the growth of civilization must be sought in the psychological sphere" (*Darwin and Modern Sciences*, p. 257. University Press, Cambridge, England).

<sup>19</sup> Benedetto Croce, *On History*, p. 314. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers. While the lectures of Hegel are themselves the best commentary, this book gives a suggestive interpretation of the Hegelian philosophy of history.

last generation it was said that his reputation was based upon his exceptional treatment of incidental truths. So the fame of Marx at the present time rests upon that which is incidental to his real and abiding work. By the many he is thought of as the leader of Socialism; by the few who are familiar with the history of historical interpretation he is known as the thinker who gave this interpretation a new direction, for since his day the material forces of history, including therein the geographical as well as economic, have assumed a larger importance. Evidence of this is found in any modern textbook on history that is compared with the textbooks of a generation ago.

There are two more thoughts that should be touched upon before closing our discussion of the question, Why is history? One thought is that these thinkers in seeking a clue to the meaning of history recognized the existence of all three forms of energy, although they differed as to origin, also the relative value. This is seen in the fact that their answers to the Why? overlap. Augustine, for example, answered as he did because a real thing occurred—the fall of Rome. His great work was intensely contemporaneous. Stung by the accusation of the pagans and eager for the defense of the Christians, he gave his answer. But, as he wrote, in imagination he heard far off reverberations and saw tumbling the walls of a city he knew. Rome was for him a thing—something physical; it was also an idea—something rational. Hegel unfolds his thought of the

intellectual as the form of energy in his brilliant "Introduction." But in passing to the actual field of history, there to apply his thought, he pauses to say something about soil and climate. He remarks that "the true theater of history is the temperate zone, or, rather its northern half."<sup>20</sup> Then he glances at America and connects the absence of discontent (he wrote a hundred years ago) with new and uncultivated lands, which acted as a safety valve upon the feelings of the people. This suggests to him the thought which must have made Marx smile with approval that "had the woods of Germany been in existence, the French Revolution would not have occurred."<sup>21</sup> This from the pen of the philosopher of the Idea! Likewise Marx passed beyond the physical. The great word in his social program is "educate." Buckle, who was the first to apply the Marxian idea to formal history, found himself in the same predicament. In the second chapter of his *History of Civilization in England* is this proposition: "Man is affected by four classes of physical agents: namely, climate, food, soil, and the general aspects of nature."<sup>22</sup> This sounds physical enough. But, as you read on in the book you notice the author has made two discoveries: One is that the powers of nature are never permanently increased; the other, that the resources of the human mind become more powerful.

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<sup>20</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 80 (Silbree translation).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> T. H. Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, p. 29 (Brisbane edition).

Because of these facts Buckle in the third chapter modifies the proposition of his opening chapter and says: "The advance of European civilization is characterized by a diminishing influence of physical laws and an increasing influence of mental laws."<sup>23</sup>

Still, this threefold classification is fairly accurate. Hegel in discussing the question of the influence of physical environment upon Greek life raised the question whether the environment was a conditioning influence or a determining factor. Now, Augustine said the determining factor in history is spiritual—the physical and intellectual being conditioning influences; Hegel, that the determining factor was intellectual; and Marx, that it was economic or physical. These thinkers rose above and looked beyond the quandaries of human society and saw history as a whole. What each of them saw, appeared so big that it seemed all needing to be seen. As a result there is something ingenuous in the conviction possessing each of these thinkers, especially Marx and Augustine, that he had discovered, not a clue but the clue to history.<sup>24</sup> Augustine was a theologian, and he was dogmatic. Marx was a free thinker, and he was equally dogmatic.

The other thought is that these answers should be dealt with apart from other considerations. Espe-

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> "This proposition, which in my opinion is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology, we both had been approaching for some years before 1845." Engels, in Preface to *Manifesto of Communist Party*. Quoted by Seligman, *Economic Interpretation of History*, p. 31. No danger of excessive modesty here.

cially important is the recognition of this thought in dealing with Augustine and Marx. Hegel was a philosopher, and philosophy does not much disturb the prejudices of men—at least, in these days. But Augustine was a theologian and Marx was a Socialist. The mention of these words, “theologian” and “Socialist,” has a disturbing affect upon many students.

Those of liberal or even radical tendencies, unless on their guard, will take counsel of their prejudices instead of their thoughts at the mention of Augustine’s name. They will recall his having lived many centuries ago and that much of his thought has no meaning for our day. All of which is true. But this thinker unfolded a daring conception of history in his *City of God* as he declared the controlling energy in history to be spiritual, which made possible a belief in progress. What concerns us is not his theological system but his conception of history—his answer to the Why? And lest the reader be inclined to discard his answer along with much else that is palpably irrelevant, let me remind him that Augustine’s answer to the Why? in a slightly different form is being given by many of our modern thinkers. For example, a generation ago when the special creation idea in Nature was being replaced by the idea of descent with modification, John Fiske defined the new conception as “simply God’s way of doing things.” But John Fiske only applied to Nature below the level of the human, the thought that Augustine, centuries before applied to Nature at the level of human. For Augustine’s thought is that history is “simply

God's way of doing things." Our interest is in this answer. Many of our living scientists accept the definition of John Fiske given a generation ago. In fact, some of these scientists in their writings are going back to Augustine and quoting from his works in support of their spiritual interpretation of Nature. But of this, something more in a later chapter.

And those of conservative tendencies likewise will take counsel of their prejudices at the mention of the name of Marx. This remarkable man thought of himself as a philosopher and accepted the materialistic interpretation of life. He believed himself, also, the leader of an impending revolution of the Workers, and as such taught the doctrine of Socialism. But the student can accept or reject his philosophy and social program entirely apart from the acceptance or rejection of his theory of history. To be sure, if he believes that the dominant energy in history is physical, it is less difficult to accept a materialistic philosophy of life than if one believes some other form of energy to be dominant. Yet, there is no necessary connection between the theory of history and the philosophy of life.

An interesting illustration of this is in the life of Buckle, the first to attempt an application of the Marxian theory to the writing of history. Buckle, it should be said, was not indebted to Marx. The evidence is almost conclusive that the economic theory (which later he abandoned) shaped itself in his mind apart from any influence of the German thinker. But—and this is the point—in being attracted to the economic theory of history, he was not likewise at-

tracted to the Socialistic program for society and the materialistic philosophy of life. So it is to-day. Some of our historical scholars accept the economic theory of history as enunciated by Marx regardless of his philosophy of life or his program of social reform. But all scholars devoted to historical work, whether they accept or reject his theory of history, are indebted to Marx, and few there are among them who do not cheerfully acknowledge this indebtedness.

Such are the answers to the question asked at the beginning of the chapter—Why is History? Since each answer names the form of energy believed to be the determining factor, the question suggested is, What evidence is there on the page of history to support these answers? That is, the question, Why is history? leads to the question, What is history? Before, however, we pass to this question, What? another question needs to be asked, namely, How is history? This question we will try to answer in the next chapter, as certain conditions met with in history are considered.



## CHAPTER II

### HOW? THE PERSON

How is history made? The answer is, By the person—individual or collective, as he is interpreted through his recorded acts. These acts, in whatever form, constitute the material of history. As this material is understood the history is made. To do this the person must be found. Until he is found there can be no history. For history is interpretation—the person interpreted in his recorded acts.

This answer is true regardless of any particular answer to the Why? whether that answer be Marxian, Hegelian, Augustinian, or any other. It is a statement of fact. In the answer the word "person" rather than the more ambitious word "personality" is used, because there is no thought of discussing the many problems suggested by the longer word. All that is meant by the answer is that history is human, its central fact being the person. Such an answer may seem too simple. For the question, How? is far-reaching. To give so simple an answer to so big a question is to indulge in a false simplicity—an intellectual sin easily committed. But this seemingly simple answer holds thought enough—also difficulties enough—to provide mental exercise for the most robust minds. Packed away in these few words about the person as interpreted in his recorded acts is, to employ the language of biology, truth enough to unpack into a pretty lusty mental plant.

As suggestive of the meaning, think for a moment of history in terms of psychology. Much is being made in these days of the psychological aspect of history. A definition frequently quoted is that of Lamprecht that "history is applied psychology." This definition, while it contains a large measure of truth, does not contain all the truth, certainly not as used by Lamprecht in his writings. But it is suggestive of the meaning that inheres in our answer to the How? At least this is so if we go a step further and recall the widely accepted definition of psychology as the science of behavior.

Now, this definition of psychology, like the definition of history quoted, is quite as simple as our answer to the How? Yet it is only necessary to scratch the surface of psychology to discover that human behavior is bewilderingly complex. So with history approached from the standpoint of psychology, for history may be thought of as psychology in the past tense. It has to do with the behavior of yesterday as seen in the recorded acts of persons. To say this, however, is not to imply that the only difference between the psychologist and historian is that one deals with persons in the present and the other with persons in the past. For their relation to behavior is different. The psychologist examines the behavior that he may understand the person; the historian finds the person that he may understand the behavior. But enough has been said to indicate that this answer, simple and brief as it is, has abundant possibilities.

Our interest, however, in this truth of the person central in history is because of its relation to the an-

swer to the Why? as given in the last chapter. Further, this truth, as will appear later on, sheds some light upon the important question of the next chapter, namely, What is history?

As regards its relation to the last chapter, it is seen at once that the question How? is unlike the question Why? Perhaps a distinction like this may be made. The question of the last chapter deals with the reasons for history; the question of this chapter deals with the method in history. Why? leads away to history as philosophy; How? to history as psychology. This distinction is more or less arbitrary and should not be pushed too far. For the temptation to indulge in classification, especially on the part of the historian, is closely allied to the temptation to indulge in false simplicity. Nevertheless, there is meaning in the distinction.

Again, there are several answers to the Why? and only one answer to the How? Thinkers differ as to the form of energy dominant in history; they are in agreement as to the central fact in history. The reason for this is that the energy which acts as a controlling force in history, is something impalpable; the person as central in history, is self-evident.

Yet, unlike as these two questions are, both need to be asked and answered, that each may be understood. The answer that the person is central in history becomes more luminous as it is remembered that the person in his actions is controlled by a form of energy coming from below, from within or from above him—the answers to the Why? On the other hand, these answers to the Why? need to be examined at close

quarters. This is done, as the self-evident answer of this chapter is kept in mind.

To make this clear, let us recall again the answers of the last chapter. Marx believed that the dominant energy in history acts as a physical pressure from below; Hegel declared that it comes from within, due to creative thought; Augustine taught that it transcends man, descends from above, and renews his spiritual nature. But, whatever the source of this energy, to have meaning for the historian it must be brought down out of the air of philosophic speculation and made concrete. This the answer to the How? does, as it reminds us that it is localized in man through whom it finds expression.

This energy is not like the wind which, other than the ship, blows upon its sails and drives the ship through the water. To think of this dominant energy, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual, as an entity independent of human experience is to commit another intellectual sin, that of reification—a sin, like the others mentioned, easily committed, but which the historian of all men should avoid. This he is able to do by keeping in mind the fact that the person is central in history. For the person alone through his recorded acts furnishes the material from which history is made.

“ . . . Man, once descried, imprints forever  
His presence on all lifeless things; the winds  
Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout,  
A querulous mutter or a quick, gay laugh,  
Never a senseless gust now man is born.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Browning, “Paraceleus.”

Having seen the relation of the question *How?* to the question *Why?* of the last chapter, let us consider for a moment the fact already stated, that the answer given to the *How?* is self-evident. As indicative of this, it is interesting to notice that all the definitions of history, both ancient and modern, that are current in the realm of historical study are based upon this truth of the person as central. It would seem that workers in the field of history have never been able to state the meaning of their work and omit the person. At least I know no such definitions. To be sure, the definitions of history are about as numerous as the definitions of religion, for the historian, like the theologian, feels the need of stating in words what he means by his subject. In doing this, either implicitly or explicitly, the person is always found. One such definition, that of Lamprecht, has been given. Let us quote a few more of the many familiar definitions. Among the oldest, also the most frequently quoted is the one usually attributed to Polybius, that "history is philosophy teaching by experience." This definition, like that of Lamprecht's, of course, has no meaning apart from the person. So certain was this fine old Greek of the central position of persons in history, he is reported to have said that had philosophy been in existence in the earliest times, religion would have been unnecessary. But he was a better historian than philosopher.

In modern times the avenues of approach to history are more in number than in ancient times. The archæological, anthropological, sociological, biological and other avenues are traversed to-day. Yet, regard-

less of the avenue of approach, this thought of the person is always found. A few of these definitions will be mentioned.<sup>2</sup> There is Hegel's, quoted in the former chapter, that "history is the development of Spirit in time as Nature is the development of the Idea in space." Although his conception of history is less concrete than some others, yet he finds the development in time as he traces the history of states which he believed would culminate in the Prussian state—a political organization and therefore composed of persons. Then the following: Bernheim's "The science of the development of men in their activities as social beings;" Moeller's "History is the biography of society;" Carlyle's "History is the essence of innumerable biographies;" Buchez's "History is a science whose end is to foresee the social future of the human species in the order of its free activities;" Freeman's "History is past politics, and politics is present history." Such are a few of the many definitions. They are unlike in their emphasis upon aspects of history, but alike in that all of them pivot upon the person. Apart from our answer to the How? no one of these definitions has meaning.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, self-evident as this truth of the person central in history is, it is easily overlooked. Only

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<sup>2</sup> A number of definitions of history are given by F. J. Teggert, *Prolegomena of History*, part iii, sec. 1.

<sup>3</sup> J. Arthur Thomson in his *Animate Nature*, vol. ii, p. 356, makes a valuable suggestion as to the use of the word "history." He suggests that the word "genesis" be used of inanimate things, the word "development" of individual life, the word "evolution" of the race, and the word "history" of man in his social relations. Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

a moment's thought about history is needed for this truth to become obvious. But experience teaches that the obvious truths are those frequently missed. The reason for this is that usually appearances seem to contradict these truths. Because of this, something of mental effort is required that the truth may become self-evident.

Most of us think of space as something real, and will continue so to think unless we are willing to make a pretty strenuous mental effort under the guidance of Einstein or Poincaré, for these mathematicians tell us that the nonexistence of space should be self-evident. They declare that space is only a word which we have believed a thing. Few of us think of physical nature as in perpetual flux. To so think a mental effort is needed. The flank of a mountain or a huge rock formation rising out of the sea suggests the immovable. Appearances seem to be against the belief that the flank of the mountain and the island of rock are forms of energy. Yet the physicist so defines matter as to define it away, for he declares that all matter is a more or less stable form of energy. Guided by what seems apparent, all of us speak of the sun rising in the east and setting in the west, and all of us will continue so to speak, although a moment's thought guided by the findings of astronomy, makes self-evident the truth that the earth revolves around the sun. So it is with this truth of the person as central in history. It is easily missed because of appearances. Only by a mental effort does the truth become obvious.

That this is so, consider the actual conditions under

which the historian does his work. He knows nothing, in a strict sense, of contemporary history. Such history is too warm to be handled either accurately or safely. His work is with events recorded, never with persons. This may seem to contradict our statement about the person as central in history. But the contradiction, as we shall see in a moment, is apparent rather than real. What we want to point out is that literally the historian in his work never deals with persons. The things which greet his eye and which he handles are lifeless. These lifeless things are recorded acts in the form of documents, inscriptions, and many other kinds of things, which have meaning because they reveal human behavior. In this respect his work is like the work of the psychologist for both study behavior. Their work, however, is unlike, in that the psychologist studies behavior in persons, whereas he studies behavior in things. The reason for this is, of course, that the psychologist studies behavior in the present; the historian behavior in the past.

A comparison that, although harsh, is both truthful and fitting is that of the material as handled by the historian with a human corpse as handled by a student of the human body—the anatomist or physiologist. The historian, like the anatomist, deals with something that once was more than it is now—this something more being life. The things in the form of inscriptions, documents, statistical tables once were animated by life even as the blood once coursed through the veins of the human corpse. Although the life is no longer in these things, the historian's task



is to examine them as an expression of life; that is, of the thought, impulse, and will of the person who once lived. This the anatomist does as he dissects the body. How finely Rembrandt has conveyed this thought in his celebrated picture. But, the fact of life having passed from the thing handled makes it easy in the handling to miss the person. For centuries the anatomists dissected the human corpse, yet missed what is now self-evident truth—the circulation of the blood. The explanation, as is known to us all, being, that at death the blood ceased to circulate in the body. A mental effort of passing from the lifeless thing to the thing vibrant with life was required. This effort was successfully made by Harvey. Thus with the historian and his no less lifeless things. Only by a strenuous mental effort is he able so to use these things that through them persons will be seen.

Another explanation, and probably a more adequate one, of the fact that the historical student often misses the person, is that the material he handles is so vast in amount and varied in kind. Because of this it is easy to see the material from which the history is made and miss the history made from the material. The saying about the cart before the horse is quite applicable to historical study. Probably the saying is more applicable to-day than at any time in the past. For historical study has become a stupendous cooperative enterprise; the purpose of which is to make real the civilization of the past in relation to the civilization taking shape in the present.

This enterprise may be likened to the assembling of

the material for the construction of a huge building. Innumerable workmen are engaged in preparing and assembling the material—stonecutters, masons, iron-workers, carpenters, and others. The material being assembled is of different kinds and is coming from near and far—from quarries, mines, forests and factories. Much of this material is interesting in itself—chiseled blocks of stone, fine-grained woods, firmly wrought beams of steel. So it is with the modern historical enterprise. Sociologists, economists, geographers, psychologists, philosophers, archæologists, and anthropologists are at work. The material gathered and prepared by these workers in their chosen fields comes from all parts of the world and from different periods of time. It is also varied in kind—physical agencies, statistical tables, economic factors, social institutions, documents, inscriptions, explored caves, uncovered tombs, and tendencies both spiritual and intellectual. The amount of this material being so vast, the kinds so varied, and so much of it interesting in itself, the student easily comes under the spell of the material and fails to find the person.

He sometimes does what Francis Drake tells us he did upon a particular occasion. To quote the language of the hardy explorer: "From hence we went to a certain port called Tarapaga, where, being landed, we found by the seaside a Spaniard lying asleep, who had lying by him, thirteen bars of silver, which weighed four thousand ducats, Spanish. We took the silver and left the man."<sup>4</sup> So with the student. He

<sup>4</sup> Frances Drake, *Stories from Halcluyt*, p. 73.

comes upon the material from which history is made. He takes the material and leaves the person. In doing this he misses the really significant; for, vast in extent and varied in kind as is the material from which history is made, it has meaning for the student as through it the action of the person is revealed.

Again, our answer to the question, How is history made? leads to another fact, namely, that the person found in history makes the history interesting. Much passing for history is, strictly speaking, not history. To describe an institution, estimate a physical agency, or do anything else that involves a mere handling of the material, is not in any true sense to write history. History is interpretation in terms of the human. Moreover, the tendency to depersonalize history, to smother the personal in tendencies, agencies, and institutions, which is in evidence in these days, explains the fact that much of our historical writing is anything but interesting.

To state it in another way, it is the extent to which the person, individual or collective, is seen or felt that determines the degree of interest possessed by the history written. The field of history may be likened to a stretch of nature. A favorite thought of Ruskin's was that it was the presence of the human that gave to nature its final and necessary touch. A glimpse of the sea with a white sail in the distance, a rolling prairie with a windmill against the sky line, a rugged mountain and clinging to its side a camper's cabin, a lovely valley and the white farmhouse green to the door—these evidences of the human give to such scenes in nature the last and finishing touch. In a

deeper sense it is the human on the page that makes it interesting reading.

It was a sagacious remark that Sir Henry Maine made to Lecky when discussing the historical work of Buckle and Spencer and noting the waning interest in them, he said, "those historians who treated society as an organization were headed for oblivion,"<sup>5</sup> for the only history that lives is the history that treats the person as central. Just the reason for this is not altogether clear. Balfour, in his work entitled *Theism and Humanism*, thinks that the æsthetic value which history possesses explains this interest. He asserts that neither its scientific value nor its practical utility is sufficient. "Men love," he says, "to contemplate the performances of their fellows, and whatever enables them to do so, whether we belittle it as gossip, or exalt it as history, will find admirers in abundance."<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the statement that there is nothing so interesting as a person is a sufficient answer.

Now, if it be true that the history that sees the person as central is the history that lives, then no apology needs be offered, for dwelling upon the importance of writing history that is interesting. This is said, notwithstanding the fact that some of our modern scholars seem to handle the historical material as though interesting treatment should be avoided. They take seriously the epigram that "the history that is interesting is not history."

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<sup>5</sup> *A Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, by His Wife, p. 123. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers. Used by permission.

<sup>6</sup> A. J. Balfour, *Theism and Humanism*, p. 96. Copyright, 1915, by George H. Doran Company. Reprinted by permission.

Probably the reason for this is these scholars understand that the historian to be interesting must use the imagination. To use imagination seems to them dangerous. Rather than run the risk involved in this danger they stress the importance of being thorough in research, accurate in statement of fact, and detached in spirit, that is, thoroughly impartial. Well, let there be no misunderstanding about this. Thoroughness, accuracy, and detachment are necessary. Imagination also is dangerous. Lamartine wrote a historical work of which a critic facetiously said that he had raised history to the level of fiction. Yes, to exercise the imagination in the use of the material and cause the person either to be seen or felt is a venture—a perilous venture.

Nevertheless, it is the person who gives to history its interest and fascination. When the person is missed from the materials as used, or if found, he appears on the page of the writer as a faded, washed-out negative of the original, then the history takes on a dull, drab color. An illustration or two will show what is meant by this. Think of the French Revolution and its effect upon English thought, which is one of the most interesting angles from which that great movement is studied. In the *Diary of Dorothy*, the brilliant sister of William Wordsworth, the words are written: "Upon Ambleside coach this morning was affixed a paper—'Great News—Abdication of Buonaparte.' But no particulars."<sup>7</sup> Only an incident—a personal touch—but what light it throws upon the

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<sup>7</sup> G. M. Harper, *William Wordsworth*, vol. ii, p. 216. John Murray, publisher, London. Used by permission.

actions of the coterie of poets who resided in the Lake region!

Again, think of the period in the history of Christianity, usually called the Metaphysical, because in this period the historic creeds took shape. Included in this period is the story of the Council of Nicea, also the Nicene Creed. What dreary and jejune pages have been written about Nicea and the Creed! Yet, turn to a page of Workman and read words like these: "Nicea studied in connection with the three centuries of struggle that preceded it, becomes no longer the arena of contending syllogisms, but a crown laid at the feet of the triumphant Christ. . . . Many bishops of the dominant party still bore in their bodies the marks of the sufferings they had endured for their Lord."<sup>8</sup> This historian refuses to indulge in a mere verbal balancing of opposing ideas in the spirit of colorless detachment. He finds the person in the event, and in doing so writes true history, also history that is interesting because vivid.

The question, How is history made? also suggests the form in which the person, having been found by the historian in the recorded events, is presented on the written page. We have seen that, although the person alone gives meaning to history, nevertheless, owing to the conditions under which the student does his work, the person is easily missed. Further, the drab-colored aspect of much historical writing is due largely to the failure of the student to find and make

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<sup>8</sup> H. B. Workman, *Christian Thought to the Reformation*, p. 64. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers. Used by permission.

vivid the person. But assuming that the person has been found in the recorded actions, under what conditions does he appear in first-class historical writing?

To answer this question let us consider, by way of illustration, one of the genealogical chapters of the Bible—the fifth chapter of Genesis. The believer accustomed to read his Bible in a devout spirit will find little in this chapter to interest him; likewise the preacher who turns the pages of the Bible in search of sermonic material, for with the exception of four verses about a righteous man the chapter says nothing that bears directly upon the struggle for character. With the historian it is otherwise. This chapter, regardless of the question of its historicity, rivets his attention, because it is an epitome of history. There is something amazingly modern about the chapter. The author deals only with persons; these persons are of different kinds; they are brought together as they are in life; they are connected, or, as we should say to-day, the relation is genetic; there are more of some kinds of persons than of other kinds of persons; finally, the appearance of the outstanding character is exceptional, only one such character being mentioned during the long period of time covered by the chapter.

The interesting thing about the chapter, at least for our purpose, is the author's classification of the persons as they appear in history. This classification is as true to-day as in the day when this genealogical chapter was written. First, the author mentions the unnamed and unknown—the nobodies of history.

This word "nobodies," it is needless to say, is used in no unpleasant sense, but simply to indicate those about whom nothing is known other than their existence. All the author is able to say about them is they were "the sons and daughters." They are the growth in the stream that never reaches the surface, but the existence of which is known by the dark patches of color on the surface. In scriptural language they are the "multitude which no man can number." In history they have always played a mighty part, and their existence is suggested by the remark made to a devout pilgrim in Rome who sought an audience with the Pope. In reply to the pilgrim's request for a relic the reply of the Pope was, "Go to the Coliseum and gather a handful of dust." But in our day, as never before, the "nobodies" have gained recognition. For one of the achievements of modern science, the influence of which is felt in historical research, is a discovery of the importance of the commonplace and obscure. A tragic expression of this is in the memorable tribute paid to the "Unknown Soldier" following the World War.

Again, there is mention in this chapter of the named but largely unknown—the everybodies of history. A glance at the chapter will show that the information furnished about these persons is meager. Their names are given, their length of days, also the names of their oldest sons. They constitute the growth in the stream of history that has succeeded in barely lifting its head above the surface. In Scripture they are "the hundred and forty and four thousand" as distinct from "the multitude that no man



can number." These named, but largely unknown, occupy a considerable space on the page of history. Recall the names of the twelve apostles and other than the fact of their being followers of Christ, all known about six of them is their names. Read the Epistles of Paul and notice the number of his friends who are named, about whom there is no further information. In our modern world think of these "everybodies" who in increasing numbers greet us. All we know about them is the name and the name connected with some event. But the unmistakable trend of civilization is in the direction of a large appreciation of the part played in history by the "nobodies" and the "everybodies."

Also the named but superficially known—the odd bodies of history. One such person is mentioned in this chapter—Methuselah. In addition to his own name the name of his father, also of his son are given. But the striking fact recorded, which makes him peculiar, is that he lived longer than any other human. The author of the chapter declares that he lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years. To return to the metaphor of the stream, he is the twisted trunk of a scarred and lifeless tree that appears well above the surface of the stream. Voyaging in the stream such a twisted formation is immediately observed without seeing in it anything of meaning. So with Methuselah. There is nothing known about him which has any real significance. William Lyon Phelps tells us that when a boy he heard Mark Twain in a lecture refer to Methuselah and mention the fact that he lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, only

to ask the question with his drawl—"What of that?"<sup>9</sup> Thus it is on the page of history at large. Such persons appear and interest us because of some striking peculiarity. But our interest is in a person whose place in history as regards interpretation is incidental.

Finally, there is mention by the author of a named and known person—the somebody of history. That is, there is mention of a person about whom something really significant is known. In this chapter the person's name is Enoch. The author says that the birth of his first boy made a deep impression upon his character, for following the appearance of the child the father began to walk with God. Then in matchless language he says: "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." Such a character is the mighty rock in the stream of history, against which the current beats, around which it swirls, and by which it is diverted. These rocks appear at intervals in the stream. There is something compelling and mysterious about them. They are part of the stream, as is the twisted trunk of the lifeless tree, the vegetation that reaches the surface, and the submarine growth known by the dark patches of color. Yet, they seem distinct from these other formations. When such a person appears, we feel that the language is appropriate, when, as of Newton, God said, "Let Newton be, and there was light."

But, a question confronts us. These different kinds of persons—the nobodies, everybodies, peculiar

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<sup>9</sup> William Lyon Phelps, *Human Nature in the Bible*, p. 14. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers. Used by permission.

bodies, and somebodies are found in the recorded events of history. How are they found in these events? Such events are of many kinds. A pyramid in Egypt, no less than a legislative act or a diplomatic document, is an event. Moreover, the nobodies are in the pyramid as a recorded event, as well as the somebody—the being under whose command the pyramid was builded. The question that needs to be answered is, How does the historian as he interprets the recorded action find the person? In what form does the person appear on the page of history?

To answer this question let us reduce this fourfold classification of persons and bring together the nobodies and everybodies, also the peculiar bodies and somebodies. Under this twofold classification we have history that is social and history that is personal.

By the social is meant the history in which the person is revealed in recorded acts, the result of collective action. By the personal is meant the history in which the person is so revealed in recorded acts as to stand forth as an individual. The nobodies and everybodies give us social history; the peculiar bodies and somebodies give us personal history. This classification need not be pushed too far, for in history, as in life, there is no sharp line of cleavage between the personal and social. Emerson's remark is true: "The soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." All social movements in history are conditioned upon the action of individuals. On the other hand the saying needs to be kept in mind that one person is no person; it takes more than one person to make one person. Nevertheless, the distinction

between the personal and social does correspond to what is found in history. A person is an individual; also he is a social being. So in history. The important point is, that the recorded acts as interpreted by the historian, whether those acts are the result of individual or collective action, do reveal the person.

History in its personal aspect, of course, suggests at once the biographical method. With due respect to certain exceptional biographies of the past, the present generation has seen the production of biographical literature at least equal to any produced in other generations. But among some of our historians there is a tendency to treat of biography as distinct from history. The reason for this is that, under the influence of the scientific spirit, these historians are led to stress the importance of the commonplace and obscure. Yet this tendency is probably temporary, and biography will again come into its own as a part of history.

The biographical method, however, varies greatly. In dealing with the great men of history—the somebodies—the aim of the historian sometimes is to convince his readers that the best of men are only men at the best. With this in mind he dwells upon the foibles and incidental peculiarities of his character. He mentions the wart on the face of Cromwell, the cloak Sir Walter Raleigh laid in the mud, the tea-kettle on the hearth overturned by Carlyle, and the book Goethe held in his hand as he breathed his last. Suetonius, in ancient times, who tells us about Cæsar combing his hair so as to cover a bald spot on his forehead, is typical of the historian who dwells upon

the peculiar and incidental in the lives of great men. There is a difference of opinion as to the value of this gossip history. Perhaps it may be justified by the fact that it awakens an interest in the great man which leads to a further and more penetrating study of his character.

Another form of biographical history is that in which the writer goes deeper than the peculiarities and uncovers for us the personality of the great man. He gives us a word portrait that is life-size and not merely a portrait of the head and shoulders. While there are some exceedingly clever word pictures of our great men by our modern writers, some of them are almost too clever to be good history. Great men are less paradoxical and more simple than they seem to be as described by some of these writers.<sup>10</sup> In modern times Carlyle stands forth as the master of sound, life-size word portraiture. Let us select one of his many delineations of character, that of Wordsworth: "He talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity, and force; . . . a fine, wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. . . . His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation; the look of it not bland or benevolent, as much as close, impregnable, and hard; . . . he was large boned, lean, but still firm knit, tall and strong-looking when he stood; a right good old steel-gray figure, with a fine rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a veracious strength looking through him."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This is strikingly shown in Lord Grey's, *Twenty-five Years*.

<sup>11</sup> *Reminiscences of Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton, vol. ii, p. 397.

This is more than clever, it is penetrating and unforgettable.

There is still a third form of biographical history, in which the personality is revealed with so ample a background that the biography constitutes a history of the period. Tacitus in ancient times used biography in this way. His delineation of the character of Agricola or Tiberius is more than the uncovering of the personality; it is the description of an historical event as formed by the character in relation to the period in which he lived.

In this generation much of our best biographical writing is of this kind. These biographies contribute to our knowledge of given events in history. The establishment and early development of the Supreme Court is an event in American history. Another event is the struggle over slavery which culminated in the Civil War. Such biographies as Beveridge's *Life of Marshall*, and Nicolay and Hay's *Life of Lincoln* shed light upon these events. In English history the period known as the Mid-Victorian is the better understood after reading Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. The unification of Italy in the middle of the nineteenth century becomes more significant after reading Thayer's *Life of Cavour*.

This kind of biographical history is quite as effective when it deals with events other than political. The most remarkable religious movement since the Reformation is Methodism, and John Wesley's *Journal* is a storehouse of information. In literature the democratization of poetry is an event, and such a biography as Harper's *Life of Wordsworth* sheds

abundant light. The founding on an experimental basis of the science of bacteriology is an event, and René Vallery-Radot's *Life of Pasteur* gives meaning to the event. These are a few of the many first-class studies in which the characters are seen as central in relation to their respective periods and so are treated as historical events. They are word portraits, life-size, but with a large background.

There is one more kind of history which should be classified as personal in distinction from history that is social. The distinction is not very clear, for this history is almost as social as personal. For want of a better term we shall call this group personality history. In this history the person is seen neither alone nor as an indefinite part of a multitude, but as one of a group.

A single illustration will show what is meant. The adoption of the Constitution by the United States is rightly considered one of the supreme events in its history. But as this event is visualized neither the unnamed multitude nor the named individual is seen. Instead certain groups of strong men are revealed. A small group is seen at Mount Vernon in 1785; a larger group at Annapolis in 1786; a still larger group at Philadelphia in 1787. Then this largest of the three groups scatters, its members to form parts of other groups as the battle is carried to the States with the opposition led by Patrick Henry, George Clinton, and others. As this event is studied no single individual stands forth as the unchallenged leader. Rather, a few exceptional men such as Washington, Madison, Hamilton, Wilson form a group leadership.

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To emphasize this group personality is not to deny the economic, geographic, political, and other factors in the event. All that is meant is that here, as occasionally elsewhere in history, the outstanding aspect of the event is the presence of a group of men who retain their individualities as the event takes shape. An English scholar in studying this great event in our history says, "If we choose to look, we can see the founders of the tradition at work like bees in a hive, careful, industrious, and ungrudging."<sup>12</sup>

Enough has been said to show that in personal history by the varied use of the biographical method, the person as giving meaning to history is found. Let us take leave of this aspect of history by quoting what are said to have been the last words dictated by the great historian Ranke, a historian who dealt more in tendencies than in personalities. He said: "On the summit of deep, universal, tumultuous movements, appear natures cast in a gigantic mold which rivet the attention of the centuries. General tendencies do not alone decide; great personalities are always necessary to make them effective."<sup>13</sup>

But what about social history as distinct from personal history? Our answer at the beginning of this chapter to the question, How is history made? was, By the person, as he is interpreted through his recorded acts. This answer was given without qualification. In fact, we added, that until the person is

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<sup>12</sup> F. C. Oliver, *Alexander Hamilton*, p. 172. Constable & Co., London, England.

<sup>13</sup> G. P. Gooch, *Historians of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 100. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.



found there can be no history. Now, this answer is clearly true as regards personal history. A study of the biographical method in the writing of personal history shows this. But, is it also true of social history? Recall the distinction made in a former paragraph between the personal and social: The personal is the history in which the person is so revealed in his recorded acts that he stands forth as an individual; the social is the history in which the person is revealed in recorded acts the result of collective action.

Nevertheless, the person is found in social history even as he is found in personal history. To be sure, he will be found in a different way. In personal history the recorded acts of the few are seen; in social history the collective acts of the many are felt. Further, in social history individuals appear, but they appear as hooks upon which to hang the thoughts and not as the controlling factors in the history. Probably the highest form of history is that in which the writer so assembles and states his facts as to cause the reader to see the person shining through the facts.

An extreme example of the absence of the personal and, therefore, the more effective is the *Peloponnesian War*, by Thucydides. His purpose was not to deal with the great men of the period but with the event in its political and military aspect. The period covered by this event and during which he lived produced a group of great men, among the most brilliant known to history. Thucydides probably had seen or knew, Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Phideas, Ictinus, and Hippoc-

rates. Yet in his history he mentions by name only Pericles. Here is certainly impersonal history with a vengeance. But—and this is the significant point—if certain great individuals are absent from his pages, the person through collective action is present. His superb art is revealed in the fact that, although individuals are ignored, persons are everywhere felt. As the lines of this ancient Greek are read, between the lines the sobs of the people can be heard. For intense, yet restrained pathos, there is no single cluster of words written by historian that surpasses the words with which Thucydides closes his history: "Fleet and army perished from the earth; nothing was saved, and of the many who went forth few returned home."<sup>14</sup>

In our day the social basis is much broader than in the days of the Greek and Roman historians. With the ancients history was aristocratic; to-day history is democratic. Acts which are important for historians in these days were ignored by the great historians of other days. A historian to-day would include much more than Thucydides included in his history. He was silent, to be sure, about the great men of the period, but this is explained by the fact that they did not serve the purpose of his art. He believed in great men and their relation to events as did Polybius, who two centuries later in giving a reason for writing his history, said, "Since the personalities of the rulers were everywhere new, it was evident that a new series of events would begin, this being the natural and usual consequence."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *The Peloponnesian War*, book vii, sec. 87. Jowett trans.

<sup>15</sup> Polybius, *The Histories*, book iv, sec. 2. Loeb trans.

It should be said, however, that this tendency to democratize history by broadening the social base to include the obscure and hitherto unnoticed has been resisted. Neither Freeman nor Lord Acton, two of the leading historians of the nineteenth century, was able to adjust himself to the change. Lord Acton found fault because the historian to-day takes his meals in the kitchen. Green is reported to have shown the manuscript of his *Short History of the English People* to his teacher, Freeman, who remarked, "Johnny, it would be a good history if you would omit the social stuff."<sup>16</sup> Fortunately for historical study, "Johnny," much as he admired his teacher, refused to accept his suggestion. As a result we have a masterpiece on every page of which the person speaks in the form of the many, for in this history the "hero is the people."

There are two kinds of history, which belong under the general head of social as distinct from personal history and which should be mentioned. Although the importance of these kinds of history has only recently been recognized, there is every indication that their importance will be increasingly felt in the years ahead. One is statistical history; the other, the history of mechanical technique. The mention of these terms—"statistical" and "mechanical technique" suggests almost anything but the person. Yet they connote actual aspects of history; and if our answer to the How? be true, these aspects of history must reveal the person.

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<sup>16</sup> *The Historical Outlook*, November, 1922. Quoted by H. E. Barnes.

Let us test our answer by statistical history. The statistical method dates back to Quetelet, who published his results less than a hundred years ago. Since his day the method has been steadily improved and its value is recognized by historical scholars.

It may be granted that it is a difficult method to use, and may be so used as to repel rather than attract. Much of the statistical history is about as dreary as anything to be found. Also it should be said that it is an extremely dangerous method to use. It requires severe practice of the art of selection, which easily results in a false impression. Some of the results obtained are about as enlightening as the old soldiers' use of statistics. He had lost a leg in the Civil War; he was the father of a considerable family; prosperity had not smiled upon him. To assist in providing for himself and family he appeared each year at the County Fair with lead pencils and shoestrings for sale. That he might attract the passers-by and also appeal to their sympathy he had a sign which read: "An old soldier, one leg, four wounds, five children—total ten." He used statistics, but his method was faulty.

Nevertheless, when used by the trained student statistics may pulsate with life as they cause us to see and feel the person, for through statistics, as through words, the meaning of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual forces in history may be made clearer. As an example, compare the statistics dealing with the health of soldiers in any war a generation or more ago with the health statistics of the World War. To do this is to feel a thrill of pride

for the advance made by medical science within a generation. This is but one of many examples that might be given of the statistical method in throwing light upon the actual conditions in history. As one of the leading statisticians says, "Figures are a simple and graphic form of experience, and I am astounded that anyone should assert that statistics are a meaningless total."<sup>17</sup> So there is nothing in the present development of the statistical method in history to cause us to lessen our emphasis upon the truth that the person alone gives meaning to history. He may be made to speak in a column of figures no less than in a document or inscription.

Also, let us test our answer by the history of mechanical technique. This aspect of social history is one to conjure with to-day among historical scholars, especially among those who see the hope of the future in a clarified intellectual life, re-enforced by the findings of science. Among such a favorite generalization is that the era in which we are living is the second great creative era in the history of civilization, the first great creative era being the Greek. In the first era critical thought was produced; in the era in which we are living this critical thought is being applied. The evidence for this is in the marvelous control being gained by man over nature due to his development of mechanical technique. But, granting the suggestiveness of this generalization, a historian is needed able to envisage this fascinating subject of mechanical technique and do with it what Gibbon did with the story of Rome's

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<sup>17</sup> Babson, in *Worcester Telegram*, June 21, 1924.

decline and fall. In doing this the historian will quickly discover that his subject, like every other subject, in history, has its meaning in the person.

A generation ago Kipling caught the meaning of mechanical technique. In his striking poem, "McAndrew's Hymn," he pictures the "dour Scots engineer" standing in the engine room of the ship and in soliloquy saying, "Lord, send a man like Robbie Burns to sing The Song o' Steam." Again, in the same poem he has the engineer say: "What I ha' seen since ocean steam began leaves me na doot for the machine: but what about the man?" This question that the old dour Scot asks, "But what about the man?" is the question that will confront the historian as he studies this tremendously significant subject of mechanical technique. Stated in its simplest terms the meaning of mechanical technique is that it is an extension of the person. The lad in the jeweler's shop in Holland who casually placed a pair of spectacles upon his nose and, to his surprise, discovered that he could see more clearly the church spire in the neighboring village, may be taken as an illustration of this fact, for his accidental discovery led to the telescope, later to the microscope, and still later to the spectroscope, all of which devices have added to man's sight. What the lens in its various forms has done for the eyes, other devices have done for his ears, mouth, hands, shoulders, and legs. The innumerable things made by man, among them the compass, printing press, and steam engine, are but things that become extensions of the person. The blind man, says the philosopher, is in contact with the earth, not at the

end of the cane that is gripped with the hand but at the point of the cane that touches the ground.

Thus far in this chapter we have dwelt upon the truth of the person as alone giving to history its meaning. This has seemed to us a self-evident truth, regardless of the fact that, owing to the conditions under which the historical student does his work, this truth is easily overlooked. Yet, as we have tried to make clear, the value of historical writing is largely determined by the extent to which the writer makes vivid the person—whether the person be seen in individual or collective action. But this thought about the person is only a part of the answer to the question, How is history made? The other part of the answer is suggested by the word “interpreted.” In the remaining portion of this chapter let us consider the historian’s task of interpreting recorded acts that he may find the person.

There is a statement by one of our modern philosophers that suggests all that need be said at this time about the interpretation of recorded acts. This thinker says, “Nothing exists except that which is in process, and everything that exists is what it does.”<sup>18</sup> These are simple but profound words. They were not written with history especially in mind, and may be applied in many directions.

Nevertheless, taken over into the field of historical

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<sup>18</sup> Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith That Enquires*, p. 126. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers. This is a stimulating book. It says in a philosophical way what Browning says in terms of poetry.

study, these words shed much light on the task of the historian. They remind us that the central problem of the historical student is to recapture the processes of the past. He deals with recorded acts. These acts are the result of energy in some form—physical, mental, or spiritual. Still, if the words of the philosopher are true, the energy taking shape in acts as recorded will always reveal a process. For, as he says, “nothing exists except that which is in process.” More than this, the meaning of the process will be found only in the recorded acts, because as this thinker declares, “everything that exists is what it does.”

Now, these words quoted hold us to the significant truth that reality is always conditioned upon the process revealed in the thing done. In doing this they remind us that the historian’s task is to interpret by recapturing processes. Others may assemble the material—economists, archæologists, and many others—but he interprets its meaning. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the interpretation of history. There is the interpretation of the material from which the history is made. It is interpretation, plus material that makes history. The reason for this is that a thing is never known until its meaning is known. To make known the meaning of things in the past is the task of the historian. In doing this he makes history.

But in what sense does the historian carry over into the field of history the philosopher’s term “process”? Is there in history, as everywhere else, a process? Objective realities exist only in process. But—and



it is a paradox—the only reality in history, namely, the person, is nonexistent. The historian has never seen a person in an historical sense. In this respect he is like the anthropologist who has never seen a primitive man, although he has much to say about him. All the historian can see are the recorded acts of persons who once lived. These recorded acts, however, make possible a process in history. For in an historical sense what is meant by process is an explanation of the relation of facts that form an event. Because of this an event exists in history only as it is in process.

A simple illustration will make clear the thought about the process. A public building called a library exists. On the shelves within the library are thousands of volumes. These volumes represent the accumulated mental labor of ages. Speaking carelessly, attention might be called to the vast amount of wisdom on the shelves. Actually there is no wisdom in these books. There is paper, ink, cloth and leather, but no wisdom. To be sure, the ink on the pages of the volumes is in such form as to suggest a mental process which leads to wisdom. But until the process of the author is recaptured by the reader there is no wisdom in the volume. So with history. The material exists in the form of recorded acts. This material is vast in amount and varied in kind. Being in the form of recorded acts it suggests processes in the past. These processes are recaptured as the relation between the acts is explained. To do this is to interpret and, therefore, to make history.

This, however, is not as simple as it seems. Notice

that the thinker quoted uses the present tense. "Nothing exists," he says, "except that which is in process." But the events of history are all in the past tense. Like the processes recorded in the volumes of the library, these events once existed as processes. They, however, have long since ceased. How, it may be asked, is it possible for an event of yesterday to be in process to-day? The answer is that as the reader recreates the process of the author the historian recreates the processes of recorded acts; that is, through constructive insight into these acts as related he gives them reality. As is said by Æschylus in *Agamemnon*,

"Knowledge belongs of right to those  
Who read the lesson of the fact they feel."<sup>19</sup>

But the recreating of these processes of the past is a perilous task. The trained historian knows and frankly admits this peril. He understands that a liberal discount must be placed on all historical achievement. For him, quite as much as for any worker in the field of knowledge, the words of the apostle are true: "Now we see in a mirror darkly."<sup>20</sup> This is so because, as has been mentioned, he never actually sees the person who is the object of his study. At best he learns about him through the records which have been left behind and which vary greatly in value as expressions of life.

Further, about in proportion as knowledge of the person increases does danger of partial judgment

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<sup>19</sup> Æschylus, *Agamemnon*. Camp trans.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 13. 12.

become real. If the historian studied animals, plants, chemical elements, or mechanical agencies, it would be otherwise. But he studies the recorded actions of human beings of like passions with himself. These actions reveal conflict about as it is found in his own life. As a result the historian is under constant pressure to take sides. He shares with all workers the limitations which Josiah Royce has in mind, when he says, "The center of the universe for every individual is where the ridge of his nose is."<sup>21</sup> Only his share is much larger than is the share of many another worker. As a scholar he will exercise caution and keep in mind certain rules of historical study. In the examination of a given event he will begin by doubting his sources and refusing to believe his authorities. He will seek to practice the spirit of detachment and aim at objective reality. Nevertheless, being a human being whose task is to study the conflicting actions of other human beings, he will find impartial judgment a dream impossible of realization.

History is rigidly impartial; the historian never is. The slant against Christianity in Gibbon's masterpiece, *The History of Rome*, was not a product of his historical research in the field covered by his great work, but was a product of his life which was encouraged by his research. A careful reading of his *Autobiography* will show this, for it illustrates, as Leslie Stephens reminds us, "how conclusions which are agreeable to the emotions can be connected

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<sup>21</sup> Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, p. 77. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

with postulates which are congenial to the intellect."<sup>22</sup> Yes, the recreating of the processes of the past is a perilous task because of the personal equation. This being so, some caution and much modesty are needed in dealing with history. Of this, something more later.

In recapturing these processes of the past, a truth of the utmost importance is discerned, namely, the existence in history of a timeless element. If the task is perilous, it is also rewarding, for this truth of the timeless element has a profound meaning as history is studied from the philosophical viewpoint. Theoretically, this truth makes neither for nor against any particular answer to the Why? for the physical, intellectual, and spiritual are alike timeless so far as history deals with them. This truth, however, does give a deeper significance to the thought of this chapter about the person. For this timeless element is in history as it is found in persons. This fact starts the mind thinking about the ultimate meaning of the form of energy as revealed in recorded acts of persons. But this will be considered in a later chapter.

When this truth of the timeless element in history is mentioned, of course we think at once of the works of genius as expressed in marble, on the canvas, in words and sounds. Phidias, Dante, Raphael, and Mozart belong to the ages, not alone to any age. As Gilbert Murray says of the works of Greek genius, they possess "a kind of stationary and eternal value, like the beauty of the dawn."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Leslie Stephens, *English Utilitarians*, vol. i, p. 8. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers, New York and London.

<sup>23</sup> *Legacy of Greece*, p. 5. Oxford University Press, publishers.

Yet, significant as is the fact of the existence of genius flowering forth in the timeless, another fact also significant is that at all times persons have lived able to respond to the timeless. Carlyle has this thought in mind when he asks: "Does Homer interest us because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece and two centuries before he was born; or because he wrote of what passed in God's world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries?"<sup>24</sup> Surpassingly wonderful is Homer writing as he did; equally wonderful is the existence in the centuries since of persons able to appreciate what he wrote. Some biologists—Bateson, for example—venture to believe that every human being is a genius and only a few such beings succeed in unpacking the genius. Perhaps the biologists are right. If so, a new light is shed on the words of Scripture, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be."<sup>25</sup>

More than this, a timeless element is *always* found when the process is recaptured in the recorded act. This is more remarkable than the timeless element in the achievements of genius accompanied by a capacity on the part of the many to appreciate these achievements. At least it is more remarkable for the historian. The recorded acts of the past vary greatly; some of them are remote in time, trivial in kind, ignoble in quality, a blend of truth and falsehood, or utterly false. To assert that these innumerable acts, regardless of time, kind or quality, contain a timeless

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Critical Essays*, vol. i, p. 291.

<sup>25</sup> 1 John 3. 2.

element is to make a sweeping statement. Yet the accuracy of this statement can be tested by any student of history who is able to recapture the processes of the past.

A cave of the Cro-Magnon with a few crude implements on the floor, some drawings on the wall, is examined. Yet the contents of the cave, having remained unnoticed for many thousands of years, have only to be interpreted, and the cave becomes inhabited by human beings, who like ourselves, put forth effort. A tomb at Luxor is opened and its contents brought forth. In the tomb are found many things, some of which are trivial—slippers, garments spotted with monograms, ceremonial couches, and chariot wheels. Interpret these things, and the tomb leads to an Egyptian palace peopled with royal persons and attendants, behaving about as people behave to-day. Study the life story of an ignoble or unscrupulous character that through the exercise of power finds a place on the page of history—a degenerate Roman emperor or a cruel woman like Lucrezia Borgia. As the story is followed, and rapid and deep descents in morality are revealed, the student finds it easy to make these descents in thought, for the human in all ages has capacity for wrong that seems to equal his capacity for right. His ability to appreciate a degenerate character is quite as great as his ability to appreciate a noble achievement of genius.

Again, think of the recorded acts of history, some of which are palpably false, others a mixture of true and false, and a few though untrue, yet exceedingly beautiful. As an example of the last named recall the

beautiful story of the correspondence between Jesus and Abgar, the sick king of Edessa.<sup>26</sup> Although the story has no historical basis, still the mind responds to the story. A good example of recorded action which is a mixture of the true and false, is a story connected with Alexander the Great and his conquests. According to this story he carried with him a copy of Homer, also a bronze statue of Hercules by Lysippus. This statue accompanied all his marches, adorned his dinner table and was affected with emotion at his death.<sup>27</sup> The point of the story, of course, is the widening influence of Greek civilization due to the marches of Alexander into distant lands. The part of the story about the statue is literally untrue. Yet, because of the will to believe, inherent in man, of which the psychologists make so much in these days, this significant story, also the beautiful story about the letters of Jesus and Abgar, are easily appreciated. As Freeman said, "A story may be untrue, yet good history," for history deals not with the truth but with men's beliefs about the truth.

Thus all recorded acts, whether near or remote, trivial or important, noble or ignoble, true or false, partly true and partly false, if the process can be recaptured, possess a timeless element. A recent writer has said: "Neither ourselves nor our environment are bounded by chronological limits; both are

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<sup>26</sup> Adolph Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, vol i, p. 122. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam Sons, publishers, New York and London.

<sup>27</sup> William Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, p. 32. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers, New York and London.

contemporary with the Pyramids just as much as with the Eiffel Tower."<sup>28</sup> The full meaning of this fact of the timeless element is not known. That it bears directly upon historical interpretation is clear. For as Croce says: "All history is contemporary history. . . . We do not study the past that we may understand the present, but we study the present that we may understand the past."<sup>29</sup> This is sound psychology as applied to history. Possibly a glimpse into the meaning of this profound fact is given us by the biologist who tells us that the vestigial remains show that our bodies are walking museums. A further glimpse is afforded by the recapitulation theory, what Haeckel calls the fundamental law of biogenesis, namely, that "ontogeny is a recapitulation of phylogeny." Whatever may be the explanation of this mysterious fact of history—and there are many explanations—the fact itself indicates that our answer to the How? which we have considered from several angles in this chapter, has deep and far-reaching implications.

There is one more thought that should be mentioned in connection with our answer to the How? Earlier in the chapter the fact was noticed that historians, ancient and modern, always define history by pivoting their definitions upon the person. Another interesting fact is that thinkers have been attracted by the metaphor of the person to express their conception

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<sup>28</sup> J. A. Smith, *Unity of Western Civilization*, p. 71. Edited by Marvin. Oxford University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Benedetto Croce, *On History*, pp. 12, 61. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace & Co.



of history. Augustine, Roger Bacon, Vico, Bossuet, Goethe, Victor Hugo, and many others have been fond of this thought of history. Perhaps the most familiar statement is in the words of Pascal: "The whole succession of human beings through the whole course of the ages must be regarded as a single man, ever living and ever learning."

The tendency to fall back upon the thought of history as a person is readily understood. There is continuity in history—Rome related to Greece and Greece to Egypt. This fact of continuity leads to the thought of unity, which in turn suggests the conception of history as a person. Then the same forms of energy—physical, mental, and spiritual—which are operative in the life of a person are likewise operative in the events of history. Further, in attempting to recapture the processes of the past the historian constantly comes upon the person. Hence, it is easy to make the transition from the thought of the person in all events to that of all events a person.

Yet it is important to notice that the statement, the person in all events recorded, which has been considered in this chapter, is unlike the statement, all recorded events a person. Each statement is true, but in a different way. The thought of the person always in the event is a fact; the thought of all events a person is a metaphor. Because of this, the all-events-a-person idea belongs among those truths that are illuminative rather than precise, suggestive but not descriptive. It belongs with such statements as "social conscience," "groups personality," "society an organism," and others, and,

like them, will yield an abundance of meaning, if not taken literally. Moreover, being a metaphor and so lacking the logic of fact, it will, like any effective metaphor, lead to facts.

With this understanding, let us use this metaphor of history a person as we pass to the next chapter and consider the question, What is history? That is, evidence in support of the answers to the Why is history? as given in the first chapter will be sought under the guidance of this metaphor. As such, this metaphor will lead us to the facts of history, for, in the words of the philosopher quoted on a former page, "everything that exists is what it does." If the physical, mental, and spiritual actually exist as forms of energy in history, the facts of history will reveal their presence. To state it in another way, having considered history as philosophy and psychology, we are now to examine it as science.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT? THE EVIDENCE

WHAT is history? This is our third question, and is unlike the other two questions. The question, Why? deals with the ultimate meaning—the philosophy of history; the question, How? with the central truth as a process—the psychology of history; this question, What? with the facts in the actual events—the science of history.

There is nothing especially profound intended by this designation of history as philosophical, psychological, and scientific. The philosophical is simply the thoughtful consideration of the meaning of history; the psychological the effort to recapture past processes; and the scientific the use of a method in the handling of the facts. This method called the “scientific” is used by every intelligent person who seeks to know what a thing does that he may understand what a thing is. One long ago said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.”<sup>1</sup>

This question, What is history? needs to be answered because of the answers given to the question, Why is history? In fact this question, Why? has valid meaning for history only as its answers are tested by the answers given to the What? As we saw in the first chapter, the question Why? was answered by saying that there is a dominant energy

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 7. 20.

which shapes the course of events in history. Marx said this energy is physical, Hegel that it is intellectual, and Augustine that it is spiritual. In order to understand what this energy is, we must know what it does. In other words, we employ the scientific method and ask, What? But this question is asked in three ways: What are the forms of energy in history? What are the conditions under which these forms of energy are met with in the actual events of history? What evidence is there that any one of these forms of energy is dominant and so shapes the course of events? These three questions, which are different aspects of the question, What is history? will engage our attention in this chapter.

It will be recalled that the truth of the person in all history, which was considered in the last chapter, has led thinkers to employ the metaphor of all history a person. But, granted that it is only a metaphor, this thought of history a person is an exceedingly suggestive metaphor, for it suggests that energy will be found in history about as it is found in the person. This, of course, is what we should expect, for if history has its meaning only in the person as interpreted in his recorded acts, then the energy operative in history would be like the energy operative in the person. So, the answers to the What? will be sought under the guidance of the metaphor of history a person, in the sense that energy is revealed in the events of history as in the person.

The first of the questions is, What are the forms of energy found in the events of history? The answer

is, The varying aspects of energy—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—are found in historical events even as these three forms of energy are found in the person.

This is a fact, regardless of any question about the conditions or relative importance. All that we want to say in giving this answer is, that in the events of history energy that is physical, mental, and spiritual is found. History seems to be the result of an unceasing, inexhaustible flow of energy, which in form varies, being physical, mental, and spiritual, as it finds expression in the recorded acts of persons. Moreover, the recognition of this fact has a practical bearing upon historical study, for it reminds us of the need of constantly making an effort to see history as a whole. By seeing it as a whole is meant seeing the three forms of energy operative in history. Unless this is done anything approaching an adequate interpretation is impossible. The saying, "seeing life whole," trite as it is, applies to history as it applies to life, and should never be forgotten by the student. To understand a person he must be seen as a personality, meaning thereby that he must be seen as the embodiment of what he is—energy that is physical, mental, and spiritual. The definition, while more obvious than informing, is true as far as it goes—that a person is the sum total of these three forms of energy. So it is with history. To see history by omitting any one of these three forms of energy is to see less than the whole of history. Further, as will be illustrated later on, to see less than the whole as the sum total of the parts, will result in a deficient

interpretation of any of the parts, whether the part chosen be economic, rational, or spiritual, for to understand a part in history or in a person it must be seen in relation to all the parts.

Yet the student in the field of historical research easily misses this ecumenical view. One reason for this, and probably the most important, is the plethora of material at his disposal. The material for the interpretive structure of history is being dumped upon the ground in stupendous quantity. As civilization advances the area of the field of history in time and space is enlarged and the methods of research improved. The result is that the amount of material accessible to the historian is increasing at an amazing rate. For example, the amount of material for the nineteenth century probably equals in amount the material for all the preceding centuries, and the material for the first two decades of the twentieth century probably equals in amount the material for the last century. A single illustration will show this: The newspaper is considered good source material by the historian. Compare a newspaper published to-day with a newspaper published fifty years ago and notice the increase in size. The increase in size is not due to the form in which the news is given, but the amount of news printed. Invention as applied to news gathering and to the mechanical make-up of the paper explains the increase in size. Think of the newspaper files for the last decade which will be at the disposal of the student a generation hence!

There is also every indication that we are about to

witness another enormous expansion of material, perhaps equal to the expansion which began with the invention of printing and continued as other inventions followed. This expansion will come as the result of the gramophone, camera (including moving picture), and possibly these in combination with the radio. For, let it be remembered, two of these appliances—the gramophone and moving picture—have special meaning for the historian, because they furnish him with permanent and accurate records of fact. These appliances are eyes and ears that see and hear and automatically record what is seen and heard. They give evidence to the event, also absolute accuracy.<sup>2</sup>

As illustrative of the change about to take place, recall the memorable page in Gibbon in which he describes the burial of Alaric. He says: "The ferocious character of the Barbarians was displayed in the funeral of the hero, whose valor and fortune they celebrated with mournful applause. By the labor of the captive multitude they forcibly diverted the course of the Busentinus, a small river that washes the walls of Consentia. The royal sepulchre, adorned with the splendid spoils and trophies of Rome, was constructed in the vacant bed: the waters were then restored to their natural channel; and the secret spot, where the remains of Alaric had been deposited, was forever concealed by the inhuman massacre of the prisoners,

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<sup>2</sup> There will still be the remote danger of dealing with pictures that are posed or rehearsed, corresponding to the forged document occasionally met with. Also, granting the accuracy of the picture or record, there will still remain the question of interpretation, which is the big question in historical work.

who had been employed to execute the work.”<sup>3</sup> This is a strange story, although there is in it nothing incongruous. As the words of Gibbon are read the imagination kindles and the burial scene becomes vivid. Yet modern historians know that the historicity of this story hangs on a slender thread. One of them tells us the basis of the story is an account written one hundred and forty years after the death of Alaric.<sup>4</sup>

Now think of an historian a generation hence writing a history of the Russian Revolution. In doing so he comes to the death of Lenin and decides to depict his funeral. He will have as material the newspaper files and other documents. But in addition he will be able to hear the voice of the orator delivering the funeral oration; also, he will see the funeral cortège as it passes along the streets. This will be possible, of course, because the record of the gramophone and the reel of the moving picture will be at his disposal. This comparison with its sharp contrast between the meager amount of material that Gibbon used and the amount of material an historian to-day can use, indicates the change that has taken place.

But, although the material is vast in amount, and increasing at an enormous rate, the student, if he is to adequately interpret it, must envisage it as a whole. To do this he need not be expected to see all around history. This would make an impossible demand upon the historian. Because of the quantity and

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. **xxi**.

<sup>4</sup> J. Harvey Robinson, *The New History*, p. 45. The Macmillan Company, publishers.



variety of the material the historian will restrict himself to a given aspect of history. It is reasonable to believe that the world will never see another Gibbon, who will do for a like stupendous event what this scholar did in his masterpiece, *The History of Rome*. To take an event near at hand: Probably no scholar will establish his reputation as a first-class historian by writing a history of the World War. Should an historian attempt this, he will discover that because he knows so much he knows less than enough, that is, the pile of material is too colossal to be handled by any individual. Specialists will deal with different aspects of the mighty struggle, and the history when written will be a compilation. Nevertheless, each of these specialists will need to envisage the whole in the sense that the part he deals with he sees as part of a whole.

This envisaging of the whole, however, is precisely what we miss in much historial writing in recent times. Instead, there is a marked tendency to see a part or some of the parts as the whole. A few years ago the economic as the clue to history was much in evidence. This clue just now is dividing attention with the intellectual clue to history. Man, to be sure, has religious beliefs, according to the intellectual answer. But these beliefs are intellectual products derived from the prehistoric, Greece, or the Middle Ages. Such a thing as spiritual energy, along with physical and mental energy, a form of energy, that like these other forms needs to be reckoned with in any adequate interpretation of history, seems to receive scant recognition by many historical writers

to-day. A generation ago John Fiske said something about the everlasting reality of religion, and Sabatier about man being incurably religious. In this generation, Shotwell the historian is saying, "Religion seems as constant a factor in history as gravitation in the material world,"<sup>5</sup> and Simpson the scientist that "man cannot help being religious, no matter what form religion takes."<sup>6</sup> Yet, many of our historians ignore the existence of this form of energy. They fail to see the three forms of energy in the events of history as these three forms of energy are in the person.

In calling attention to the fact of the three forms of energy being found in the events of history, it should be said that the question of origin is not raised. This question need not concern the historian. His concern is with the evidence of the presence in events of three forms of energy which in their operation seem unlike. These forms of energy may have a common origin. Life may be a more highly organized form of matter, having had its beginning in some colloidal, carbonaceous slime. Or life may be fundamentally different from matter. The brain may be a productive or transmissive organ. The spiritual may be the result of influxes from a spirit world as Wallace believed, or the product of social forces as Dewey and others teach. The extreme mechanistic interpretation may be true, and history be a vast tropism, although a

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<sup>5</sup> J. T. Shotwell, *The Religious Revolution of To-Day*, p. 66. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

<sup>6</sup> J. Y. Simpson, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*, p. 63. Reprinted by permission of George H. Doran Company, publishers.

little common sense may make it difficult to accept so simple an answer. Or, history having to do with persons, may have in it something that is actually free and fortuitous, for, as Fite finely says "The thing which I now deliberately choose to do is never the effect of a cause but the expression of a reason."<sup>7</sup> These are big and fascinating problems that impinge upon historical interpretation but are not involved in the interpretation. All that needs to be insisted upon just now is that in the events of history, as in the life of the person, the physical, mental, and spiritual are found. To see history and omit any one of these forms of energy is to see less than the whole of history and so miss its meaning.

Having answered the first of the questions, What are the forms of energy in history? the second question follows naturally. What are the conditions under which these forms of energy are found in the events of history?

Here the metaphor of history a person becomes exceedingly suggestive. It may be only a coincidence; nevertheless, it is a remarkable fact, that the conditions under which these forms of energy are met with in historical events are precisely the conditions under which they are met with in persons. Recapture any process of history by explaining the connection between the factors that constitute the events, and you come upon an expression of this mysterious something which we call energy under conditions similar

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<sup>7</sup> Warner Fite, *Individualism*, p. 10. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.

to the conditions under which this energy is expressed in the life of a person. This, let me repeat, is a remarkable fact, and perhaps has in it a deep implication as to the ultimate meaning of history. But we are dealing with the science of history in this chapter—the What? let us confine ourselves to the facts.

One such fact is that the physical is more in evidence than either the intellectual or spiritual.

As we have seen, all three forms of energy are in history at large; probably all three forms of energy are in every event of history. But, without fastening the eye upon any particular events but thinking of historical events in general, it would seem that the physical is more in evidence than either of the two other forms. Also, the intellectual would seem to be more in evidence than the spiritual. Because of this the physical aspect of a historical process is more easily recaptured than the intellectual and the intellectual more easily than the spiritual. This, however, is what we find when we attempt to understand a person. The physical appearance is readily perceived—the weight, height, complexion, and other bodily traits. Less easily perceived is the mental life of a person—the intellectual furnishings of his mind. But the least easily perceived part of a person is the spiritual—the convictions, motives, and ideals. A passing glance will reveal the physical, a conversation will indicate the mental, but to understand the spiritual patient observation is required. The reason for this is, that the physical lies nearest the surface, the mental farther down, and the spir-

itual still farther below the surface. Something like this seems to be true of the forms of energy in the events of history.

This, in a measure, explains the tendency to stress the physical aspect of historical events, for it is easier to interpret a thing than an idea. Such subjects as a military campaign, the effect of climate upon health, of soil upon population, of transportation upon the growth of cities are more readily handled by the historian than a mental subject which involves the tracing of an idea in its effect upon human thought. Likewise, it is easier to deal with an idea than an ideal. For example, think of the number of treatises in recent years dealing with the Reformation of the sixteenth century, which leave untouched the spiritual. This stupendous event has its economic and intellectual significance. By explaining the event as a thing and an idea scholars have made valuable contributions. Still, it remains true that this event never yields its deepest meaning until the historian holding in his hand the key unlocking the human heart finds therein a thirst for the spiritual. The good may be the enemy of the best in historical work as in life.

Perhaps, to carry the thought a step further, this difficulty of finding the spiritual partly explains the tendency on the part of many of our recent historians to overlook the spiritual as a form of energy in history. This absence of the spiritual in the writings of these historians is indicated in two ways: Some of them, as was mentioned in a former paragraph, simply ignore the spiritual. For such, the only thing that

counts is the economic factor or the controlling idea. Others do not ignore the spiritual but evade the issue by using a twofold classification—the physical and psychical. Under the psychical they include the intellectual and spiritual. But such classification is poor science. To classify the intellectual with the spiritual, and call it the psychical is no less inaccurate than to classify the intellectual with the physical. The facts are against such a classification. In this connection it is interesting to notice the use of these terms by Benjamin Kidd in his books which have been so widely read during the generation now closing. In his earlier books he employed the twofold classification of physical and psychical. But in his last book, *The Science of Power*,<sup>8</sup> which came from the press shortly before his death, he recognized the inaccuracy of his earlier classification, and so speaks of the physical, psychical, and spiritual.

The truth is, like persons, the events of history for their adequate descriptions need the three words. There are events in which the dominant form of energy is physical, mental, or spiritual. Write the history of a trading corporation, such as the East India Company of the eighteenth century, and a physical term is needed. Unfold the wonderful story of an Isaac Newton, and the term "mental" will be needed. Trace the thrilling and sacrificial career of a David Livingstone as it leads into the heart of

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<sup>8</sup> This book was published in 1918, the closing year of the World War. Perhaps this accounts for the lack of attention. For this is a disturbing and thought-provoking book—a more vital book than his *Social Evolution*—that was so widely read twenty-five years ago.

Africa, and the only term that will do is the term "spiritual." Such a word as "psychical" in this connection sounds flat. The reason for the need of these terms is that they are word symbols of forms of energy operative in history as in persons.

Nothing has been said thus far, which would imply that these forms of energy are necessarily contradictory. Yet it must be admitted, that in the events of history, as in lives of persons, some one form of energy may find expression at the expense of the others, or two forms of energy may be expressed and a third form ignored. When a human being allows the appetites of the body to gain control he suggests the beast. Again, when a human being has a keen mind in a sound body but lacks the spiritual, he suggests something cold and harsh. Still, again when a human being has the spiritual developed apart from the mental he suggests the fanatic. So it is with the events of history. Nevertheless, these forms of energy need not be contradictory. For among thinkers in whose minds the mighty conception of unity is taking shape there is a growing conviction that these forms of energy are but variations of some underlying creative Power. As this underlying creative Power, as regards history must find expression in the actions of persons, the variations of the energy reveal the limitations and possibilities of persons who are slowly winning their freedom.

Although there seems to be more of the physical than the mental, and of the mental than the spiritual in history, actually this may not be true. But, granted that there seems to be more of the physical

than of either the mental or spiritual, it does not follow that the physical is of more value. No one would think of saying that the physical as a form of energy is of more value in a person than either the mental or spiritual forms of energy. In the development of character we think of the body as coming under control of the mind, and of mind and body coming under control of spirit. So it is with the events of history. These forms of energy are expressions of consciousness at different levels—the mental being at a higher level than the physical and the spiritual at a higher level than either. As mankind increasingly wins his freedom the events of history will increasingly reveal the spiritual. Seligman, who claims for the economic interpretation of history more than some of us would admit, has this thought. He says, "When a more ideal economic adjustment is reached, . . . then indeed the economic conditions will fall into the background."<sup>9</sup> Again he says, referring to the economic: "It is a relative rather than an absolute explanation. It is substantially true of the past; it will tend to become less and less true of the future."<sup>10</sup>

Another fact to notice is that these forms of energy exist in the events of history as a composite. They have been spoken of thus far as separate entities each unlike and apart from the others. They are, we believe, separate entities, also each form of energy is unlike the other forms of energy. But in turning from the printed page on which a discussion appears,

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<sup>9</sup> E. R. A. Seligman, *The Economic Interpretation of History*, p. 155. Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.



to the events of history you find a different condition. Here the three forms of energy are not like three apples in a dish which may be separately handled; neither are they like the three strands of a rope which may be unwound, counted, and rewound. They are not even like the steel filings in the mound of sand which are distinct from the sand because they can be drawn forth by a magnet. If they existed in the events of history in some such distinct way, then the answer to the Why? would be less difficult. But, alas! when we ask "What?" and turn to actual history, we nowhere find any one of these forms of energy as distinct from the others.

Yet, with our metaphor of history a person to guide us, this is precisely what we should expect to find, for these forms of energy always exist in a person as a composite. To be a person there must be the physical, mental, and spiritual. This much at least is implied in personality. But these forms of energy are no more separate and distinct in a person than in an event of history. To be sure, in textbooks on psychology there may be separate chapters dealing with the body, the intellect, emotions, and other parts of the person. Or there may be a chapter on the body in relation to the mind and another chapter on the relation of the mind to the body. But these textual distinctions are apparent rather than real and are made for the sake of mental clearness and convenience. All of us know that in actual life there is no such thing as mind *and* body. The mind may be other than the body, but in the life of every person it is so blended with the body that when we speak according to fact,

we say mind-body, or body-mind, not body *and* mind. So it is with history. Any event studied reveals these forms of energy as a composite, or, better still, as a blend.

Because they exist in history as a blend, our knowledge of these forms of energy is limited. None of us knows exactly what he means when he uses these terms "physical," "mental," and "spiritual." This is true of the psychologist dealing with these forces in the behavior of the person; it is also true of the historian who attempts to interpret the person as he recaptures the processes of the past. Earlier in the chapter it was said that a thinker uses the scientific method when he seeks to know what a thing does in order to understand what a thing is. Relatively, this is easy in the physical sciences, for there is only one form of energy—the physical. It becomes more difficult as animate nature is studied, for there are the two forms of energy—the physical plus something that seems like the mental. When the level of the human is reached the task becomes extremely difficult, for the three forms of energy are found. Further, as has been said, these forms of energy are always in blend. Because of this, precise statement is impossible. The best we can do is to state certain facts about each form of energy which differentiate it from the other forms that appear in history.

In doing this we notice that the distinctions existing as these forms of energy are seen in the life of an individual are those distinctions existing in the events of history. For one thing, there need be no doubt that the physical is unlike either the mental or spir-

itual. It can be seen and handled, for it exists in space. This being so, the physical as a form of energy can be measured. The statistical method has to do entirely with the physical aspect of history. The measuring line is useless in dealing with mental and spiritual forces. Further, the physical can be given away but never shared, whereas the spiritual and mental can be shared but never given away. More than this, the physical when used diminishes in quantity. Civilization has been diverted due to the diminishing supply of the physical. With the mental and spiritual it is otherwise. No person was ever impoverished by his willingness to expend either mental or spiritual energy.

When a comparison is made between the mental and spiritual the line of demarcation is less marked. The distinction is none the less real, but the line of separation is more shadowy. One may be unable to detect the moment in time when day ends and night begins, nevertheless, he knows that he has passed from day to night because of difference in conditions. So it is with the mental and spiritual. The mental has to do with perception and reason, the spiritual with the emotions. But it is the emotional, not as a whim or mood but as a fundamental element in the person, that merges into will and warms the intellectual faculty with desire.<sup>11</sup> The mental gives us understanding; the spiritual gives us power. Through

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<sup>11</sup> Henry Osborn Taylor uses the term "spiritual" "to signify the activities of the mind which are emotionalized with yearning or aversion, and therefore may be said to belong to the entire nature of man." See *Medieval Mind*, vol. i, p. 23.

understanding we know what is truth; through the spiritual we are able to do the truth. The mental leads to the rational; the spiritual never leads away from the rational, but sometimes beyond it. During a dark hour of the World War Kipling wrote, "Who dies, if England lives?"—a spiritual truth. Had he written, "Who lives, if England dies?" his words would not have reached as far, for in the spiritual there is something that transcends time. As Dean Bosworth so beautifully and truly says of the spiritual person, "He has taken the long look toward the horizon against which no trifle can loom up large. He has put himself under the steadying spell of eternity."<sup>12</sup>

A further distinction is that there is no necessary connection between mentality and spirituality. Usually there is a connection, for clear thinking tends to pass into wholesome living. But, alas! every once in a while a person appears who is a giant in intellect and a pigmy in character. More than this, granted that under normal conditions clear thoughts pass into good acts, nevertheless, there seems to be a limit to the influence of the intellect upon conduct. But there is no limit to the influence of the spiritual upon conduct. A person never possesses more of the spiritual than he needs to live a good life. Perhaps

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<sup>12</sup> E. I. Bosworth, *What It Means to Be a Christian*, p. 81. Copyright, The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission. This little book, published in 1922, is a masterpiece, and gives us the seasoned conclusions of one of the deepest religious thinkers of our day. It is thoroughly modern and practical, yet possesses a charm due to a touch of mysticism, to express which, is the despair of most writers on religious themes.

the most convincing evidence of the distinction is the fact that when any one comes upon character shot through and through with goodness, whether he meets the character on the page of literature, in an event of history, or in actual life, he feels that he is looking upon the finest thing in the universe. All other values, be they physical or mental, become secondary, for there can be nothing better than a good life. Perhaps a statement like this will suggest the meaning: *The spiritual is the perception of the idea lifted to the level of the ideal by the power of emotion and applied to the things of life.*<sup>13</sup>

This fact of the blend of the three forms of energy suggests another fact, namely, that the blend is sometimes such that it is impossible to determine which form of energy is dominant in a given event of history.

It may be granted that there are events in history dominated by one of the forms of energy. This form of energy may be the physical, as Marx believed; the intellectual, as Hegel declared; or the spiritual, as Augustine asserted. A final judgment upon the value of their answers, however, is made difficult by the fact that there are events in history in which the blend is so perfect that it is impossible to say which of the three forces is in control. Yet this condition is frequently met with in the life of the person. Occasionally an individual is seen in whom the physical is so prominent that he suggests an animal on all

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<sup>13</sup> "When we pass over from causation acting from behind to changes produced by ideals in front, we cross one of the widest chasms in the world." Rufus Jones, *Social Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 63.

fours. He is a victim of his bodily appetite and so is a glutton, a drunkard or a libertine. Once in a while the individual is found in whom the mental is abnormally developed, and so he is a thinking machine. There is a saying sometimes applied to a person of keen mentality that he is intellectually a democrat and socially an aristocrat. Something like this was in the mind of the poet Clough who visited Florence Nightingale and told her that he needed work to do, for he had been thinking too much.<sup>14</sup> Now and then an individual is encountered in whom the spiritual has been developed at the expense of the physical and mental. His head is well up in the air, but his feet are not firmly planted on the ground. As a result his beard is streaked with moonlight and he is a fanatic.

Now, these conditions are found in the events of history. After all is said in defense of war—and much is said—the terrible fact remains that it means the emergence of the physical, by the use of and at the expense of the mental and spiritual. The study of any military event reveals this fact. The history of ideas, often enough indicates a cold-blooded, calculating attitude toward life. Mental culture no less than physical power may be perverted. Alas, the story of religion in which the spiritual is supposed to blossom is more often than we like to admit, the story of a narrow, intense, and withering narrowness.

On the other hand, these forms of energy may be in such blend that it is impossible to decide which of

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<sup>14</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, vol. ii, p. 11. The Macmillan Company, publishers.

them is in control. Usually it is a blend of two of the forms, sometimes the physical and mental; again the mental and spiritual. For example, take the question of man and his learning to use tools. The anthropologist gives us an interesting picture of the process. He tells us that the hawk taught man to fish, spiders and caterpillars taught him to spin, the hornet to make paper and the cray-fish to work in clay. Assuming this picture to be accurate, it reveals man's mind reacting to nature's example. But which is the dominant form of energy, the physical in nature or the mental in man? Again, the historian tells us that papyrus from Egypt was shipped to Phœnecia in the twelfth century, B. C.<sup>15</sup> But, was it the importation of papyrus which encouraged the invention of the alphabet, or did the invention of the alphabet encourage the shipment of the papyrus? A striking illustration is the sending of missionaries to Patagonia. The effect upon the native was seen in a marked increase of the population due to the abandonment of the heathen practice of infanticide. But this increase in population led to a shortage of food which required the shipment of farming implements. Here is a blend of the spiritual and economic.<sup>16</sup>

This same blend of the forms of energy is seen in ideas and ideals. A single illustration will suffice. Since the masterly biography by Sir Edward T. Cook, the character of Florence Nightingale has

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Shotwell, *Introduction to the History of History*, p. 30, from Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. iv, p. 284.

<sup>16</sup> *The Unity of Western Civilization*. Edited by Marvin, chap. ii, p. 4. Article by J. L. Myres. Oxford University Press, publishers.

loomed up larger on the page of history. The beautiful myth of "Flo" has not been destroyed, but set in an ample historic background. As the story of her life is read on the pages of Cook, she is revealed as a woman of exceptional mentality balanced by a deep spirituality. So finely are these forms of energy balanced that it is impossible to decide which was dominant. Like the philosopher who said he would as soon be dead as alive, and when asked why he did not die, replied, that he would as soon be alive as dead. So with the question of the dominant force in this and many other lives.

Sometimes all three forms of energy are in such blend, that the answer is difficult. Attempt, for example, to tell the story of the Papacy as it took shape in the early centuries of the Christian Era. This is one of the really big events in history, and an event demanding for its interpretation not only sound scholarship but, what is of equal importance, historical imagination. As the event is studied the physical is seen to bulk large. For geography that is the central position of Rome, and later the distance separating Rome from Constantinople must be reckoned with. The intellectual is there as found in the conception of power taken over from the Roman theory of the state and used in the organization of the church. The spiritual is in the event—the presence of something that cannot be explained by either the physical or intellectual—a ghostly something that appealed powerfully to the people of that time as illustrated in the famous story of Attila, the Bishop of Rome, and "that other man." The his-



torian who sees this event as a whole finds it difficult to decide which of the three forms of energy played the dominant part.

Likewise, this blend of the three forms of energy is occasionally found in the career of some world-compelling character. As the character of Abraham Lincoln is studied the impression made upon the mind is that it was a blend of these three forms of energy. Certainly, the spiritual was in the character of the man who in the period between his first election and inauguration, while the black clouds caused by slavery were gathering in the sky, read the story of Gethsemane on his knees.<sup>17</sup> No less certainly the mental was in his character, for the evidence is unmistakable that his mind had in it a tough intellectual fiber. But his career is not explained by the spiritual and mental, for the physical, in a large use of the term, must be understood—his humble origin, his stern struggle on the frontier, the ample prairies on which his character matured. Edward Markham has caught this thought in his great poem:

“The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;  
The smack and tang of elemental things;  
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;  
The goodwill of the rain that loves all leaves;  
The friendly welcome of the wayside well.”<sup>18</sup>

Still another fact to notice is the existence of the environment and its relation to the event. For an event like a person never exists *in vacuo*, but always in relation.

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<sup>17</sup> I. M. Tarbell, *Life of Lincoln*, vol. i, p. 406.

<sup>18</sup> “Lincoln.”

What the relation is between an event in history and its environment is largely a mystery. It is the most baffling question that confronts the historian, also the most fascinating. The question of the organism and adaptation to its environment in biology is baffling enough, but it is a simple question as compared with the question of an historical event as interpreted in the light of its environment. If for no other reason this is so because an organism is a definite entity in space, whereas, an historical event is a more or less flexible entity in time. A single document issued in a given place and at a given time is an event; likewise the American Revolution existing in many places and covering a considerable period of time is an event. Any genuine scholar has only to ask and ponder the question, What? as regards event and environment to be conscious of his ignorance. The best we can hope to do is to treat the question as we did the question of the meaning of the terms, physical, mental, and spiritual, by pointing out some things that seem to us true.

Before doing this let us briefly mention our use of the terms "event" and "environment." In a later chapter these terms will be considered more carefully, for a correct understanding is of importance, if a final answer is to be given to the Why? For the present let us say that by an event in the historical sense is meant such a grouping of recorded acts as to reveal both integration and differentiation. The integration consists in the unity revealed as the acts are grouped; the differentiation as the recorded acts thus grouped create an event unlike other events. By

the environment is meant all that lies outside the event, yet is related by acting as an influence upon the event. With this rather vague and general statement before us, let us notice some things about the environment in its relation to the event.

The first thing to notice is that the environment, like the event, is a blend of the three forms of energy—the physical, mental, and spiritual. In this respect the metaphor of history a person is true to the conditions in the life of a person, for the environment of any individual person is a blend of things, ideas, and ideals. In other words, there is a social heredity as well as an inborn heredity. This is sometimes overlooked in historical study. In dealing with the environment the tendency is to emphasize the physical in the form of the geographic or economic. Such things play a tremendous part in the shaping of historical events, and there is no disposition to under-emphasize them. But they do not alone constitute the environment. Ideas and ideals no less than things are in the environment. An illustration will show this: The Declaration of Independence is an event in history. It is commonly believed that the pamphlet by Thomas Paine entitled *Common Sense* exerted a pronounced influence upon this event. At least this was the judgment of both Washington and Samuel Adams. But a reading of the pamphlet shows that he made much of the geographical factors in the situation—the size of the continent and the distance from the mother country. Yet the geographical was only one factor in the environment, for the people had certain ideas of freedom that must be considered

if this event is understood. They were not under the iron heel of tyranny but were the freest people on earth. Being free, they resented any encroachment upon their freedom. More than this, the spiritual factor in the environment needs to be reckoned with. In the second half of the eighteenth century the political leaders in the colonies possessed a moral fiber superior to the moral fiber possessed by the political leaders in the mother country. This fact is established, not by anything said by the colonists about themselves, but by the words of English historians, such as Lecky in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*.

Then, it is well to keep in mind that every event is an original package in the midst of an environment of endless variation. If no two plants or animals are alike, how much more must this be true of complex historical events! And if true of events, it is equally true of environments. It may afford mental satisfaction to some thinkers who believe in the universal reign of law to assert that every person, likewise every event under similar conditions, always reacts in the same way to its environment. To this assertion there can be no objection. But to assert this is not to say anything of value, although it may assist thinkers of a certain type in maintaining their intellectual self-respect. For the qualifying words, "under similar conditions," rob the statement of any value, because the chance of securing similar conditions is infinitely remote. In the days when the philosophers made much of the law of probability, La Place attempted to state in figures the chance of a coin tossed into the

air landing the same side up thirty consecutive times. He reached the conclusion that there was one chance in five hundred million. So with the reaction of events to environments. The variation in the environment, likewise in the event, makes similarity of reaction well-nigh impossible. This in a measure explains what seems like the fortuitous in history. Perhaps, instead of the fortuitous there is endless variation.

Another thing to remember is that the event is never distinct from the environment. When we speak of the event and the environment, we do so in the same way that we speak of the body and the mind. It is a convenient use of language for the sake of mental clearness. Actually, no event in history is ever isolated from the environment any more than a human body is ever isolated from the mind. It is this fact that makes the problem of environment in history so baffling to the student. The biologist tells us that a trout cannot be separated from a stream and still be a trout. To angle for him with rod, line, and fly and land him on the bank of the stream is to leave part of him behind. To be described accurately, he must be seen in his environment, which is the stream, because in a biological sense the stream is part of him. So it is with the events and environments of history. They are blended and must be seen in blend to be accurately understood. This means, of course, that no event can be fully and completely described. As an illustration recall the familiar saying, "Greece captive, captured Rome." The event is the expansion of Rome into a world power. Part of

the environment for the event is Greece. But the environment blends with the event, for in capturing Greece, Rome itself is captured by Greece.

Further, there is a continuous commerce between the event and the environment. The result of this commerce is that the environment is changed as well as the event. This is what we should expect, because of the fact that the event and environment are always in blend. In the life of a person the body is changed by the mind, even as the mind is changed by the body. The same kind of reciprocal action is seen in history between the event and the environment. Yet, obvious as this fact becomes the moment we think of the actual condition, it is easily missed. The tendency is to see the environment as something outside and acting upon the event. Further, there is usually so much more of the environment than of the event, and its influence is so much greater, that it is easy to miss the event as an influence acting upon the environment. But this fact of reciprocal action has a deep meaning, for it throws some light on the problem of progress in history as it lifts the iron hand of a deadening necessitarian theory of human action. Perhaps the old conundrum in chemistry will suggest the relation: "How do hydrogen and oxygen unite so as to become water?" The answer is, "They do not become water; they produce it." So with the event and the environment. The meaning is not alone in what is found in the event plus what is found in the environment. But, in addition, there is what is created as the result of the commerce between the two. Something new has been produced.

Moreover, because of this continuous commerce, no event is ever fully explained by the environment. This, of course, follows from what has been said about the reciprocal relation. On the other hand, no event is ever fully explained apart from the environment. This also follows because of the reciprocal relation. It may be true, as the philosopher says, that self-conscious beings are capable of changes purely from within. But the historian is not called upon to consider these changes. His task is to deal with self-conscious beings in their social relations. These social relations are the recorded acts which, grouped, form the historical events and which are always influenced by environment. He cannot adequately interpret the event without a study of the environment. Nevertheless, the effect of environment may be overstated. This is seen in a study of great men. As was said of Taine with his theory of virtue and vice being products like sugar and vitriol,<sup>19</sup> he accounted for everything in a great man but his greatness. Another illustration is in the familiar saying that a great man is a product of his times. Understand the times, for example, the time during which Luther lived, and you will understand Luther. The answer is, If the times produced Luther, it is strange that they did not produce a thousand Luthers.

A third question is, What evidence is there that any one of the forms of energy is dominant and so shapes the course of events in history?

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<sup>19</sup> H. A. Taine, *History of English Literature*, p. 6. Van Laun trans.

In answering the questions, What are the forms of energy in history? and what are the conditions under which these forms of energy exist in actual historical events? nothing has been said that would necessarily contradict the answers to the Why? given by Marx, Hegel, and Augustine. These thinkers did not deny the presence in history of these forms of energy. What each of them did was to insist that a particular form of energy was dominant and so furnished a clue for the interpretation of history. Our question is, What evidence is there to support their answers?

Let us begin with the physical as the dominant form of energy. By the physical is meant any interpretation that finds the clue to the meaning of events in a form of energy other than the intellectual and spiritual. The interpretation may be economic, geographic, or something else. But its characteristic is that some aspect of the physical bulks largest. That the physical has played a tremendous part in shaping events is seen in the terminology used by those who stress the physical to designate the epochs of history—Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Steel Age. These terms as they insist, are silent witnesses to the influence of the physical upon history. Now, it is unnecessary to dwell at length upon this evidence. Thanks to modern scholarship such evidence is unmistakable in support of the physical answer to the Why? There is a bit of gossip to the effect that when Buckle wrote his *History of Civilization* he had built on his table at which he wrote some shelves. On these few shelves he assembled all the books in print that dealt with the physical in its effect upon history.



This was no longer ago than the middle of the last century. But visit the department of history in a well-equipped modern library to-day and notice the number of books on the shelves dealing with the physical aspects of history!

Instead of discussing the evidence two illustrations will be given. One in the field of anthropo-geography, to employ Ratzel's term. This can only be mentioned. For example, examine a volume such as Semple's *Influences of Geographic Environment* or the more recent volume by Newbigin entitled *The Mediterranean Lands*, and notice the part that climate, soil, rivers, and sea have played in the history of nations. This evidence is so varied that it cannot be given in the space at our disposal.

The other, from the field of economic history. The story of the Civil War in the United States is told something like this: Along the sea coast in the South is a restricted area under cultivation with long-staple cotton. Elsewhere are men and women at work with their hands making the cotton into cloth. Both the supply and the demand are limited. The supply is limited because only long-staple cotton can be profitably grown and in a restricted area; the demand is limited, because hand power alone is used to make the cotton into cloth. But Hargreaves, Cartwright, and Arkwright appear with their inventions of the loom, spinning jenny, and factory system. A little later Eli Whitney appears with his invention of the cotton gin. Suddenly the demand for cotton increases, due to the English inventions based upon the application of steam power to industry. This sudden in-

crease in the demand is met by a corresponding increase in the supply. For the American invention makes it commercially profitable to raise the short-staple cotton—and to raise it outside the restricted area. The result is a vast increase of the cotton crop from two million pounds in 1790 to four hundred thirty-four million pounds in 1834.<sup>20</sup> Along with this increase in the amount of cotton raised, is an upward movement in the market value of slaves. This, according to the economic theory, is the answer to the What?

Hence all that followed in the form of political debate and ethical discussion was the outcome of these economic facts. To write the history of the period culminating in the Civil War and place the political or ethical in the forefront is a false grouping of facts. John Taylor, of Caroline, might write his *Constructions Construed*, but his pen was of gold; William Lloyd Garrison might print his *Liberator*, but his little white sheet with black type was in miniature the white cotton field with black slaves. For the cause of the Civil War was the enhanced value of the slave, due to the increased acreage of cotton, made possible by the cotton gin, called forth by the inventions based upon steam power. The intellectual and spiritual are in the history, but as conditioning influences. The determining factor is economic.

Second, the intellectual as the dominant form of energy. Like the physical, evidence in support of the

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<sup>20</sup> F. J. Turner, *Rise of the New West*, Am. Nation Series, p. 47. Harper & Brothers, publishers.

intellectual is found on every hand and is varied in kind. There are the ideas that exist in documents, and through these documents influence the course of events. Read the Magna Carta of the thirteenth century and then trace in English history the influence of the ideas in this memorable document.<sup>21</sup> Study the French Revolution in its earlier stages and you are compelled to reckon with the ideas in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. But those who wrote the Declaration, while influenced by the ideas of Rousseau, were also influenced by the ideas in the Virginia Bill of Rights. Jellinek has printed in parallel columns the two documents and shown that the makers of the French document were not only influenced by the American document, but borrowed some of its language.<sup>22</sup> The dictum, "no document no history" may no longer hold in historical study, but the documents of history furnish indubitable proof of the influence of ideas.

Again, there are periods of history that can be understood only as certain ideas are seen as dominant.

The story of Christianity, which is much more than a story of ideas, nevertheless illustrates this fact. There is the metaphysical period which reaches from Nicea to Chalcedon, during which the dominant idea

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<sup>21</sup> An idea may exert influence and the historian be mistaken in tracing the idea to a given document. For centuries and until recently the origin of trial by jury was supposed to be in the Magna Carta. This is now believed to be a mistake. This question of the influence of mistaken ideas in history is discussed by W. A. Dunning in *American Historical Review*, January, 1914.

<sup>22</sup> Georg Jellinek, *Rights of Man and of Citizens*. Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

was a definition of the person of Christ. There is the institutional period which followed, in which the papacy took shape and the dominant idea is that of organization. There is the period of protest with Wyclif, Erasmus, Luther, and Zwingli in the foreground, a period in which the dominant idea is that of freedom. The same fact is seen in the story of states. In modern times, especially since the French Revolution, the idea of nationalism has emerged and played a dominant part. Just at the present time this idea is struggling for mastery with the idea of internationalism. These are but a few illustrations chosen at random of the fact that certain ideas dominate given periods of history and shape the course of events.

Also there are brief moments in history—ticks of the clock as compared with the years of history—when in some unaccountable way, several creative thinkers give utterance to new ideas which turn the course of human progress.

The classic illustration of this is the Golden Age of Greece. Another familiar illustration is the appearance of artistic genius in Italy in the persons of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raphael. Something like this seems to have happened about the middle of the nineteenth century in the creative work given to the world by Lyell, Darwin, Wallace, Pasteur, and Marx. A striking illustration is found in the early history of the United States and in a restricted region, for a circle may be drawn in northern Virginia with a diameter of a hundred miles. Within the area bounded by this circle six men lived, all of whom were

known to one another. They were: Patrick Henry, "who spoke as Homer wrote"; George Mason, the author of the "Virginia Bill of Rights"; Thomas Jefferson, from "the point of whose quill flowed the thoughts of a continent"; James Madison, the scholar of the Constitution; John Marshall, the creator of nationalism through judicial interpretation of the Constitution; and George Washington, the greatest of them all, who "raised common sense to the level of genius."

Then, ideas are sometimes traced in certain individuals who are able to exert such influence that the course of history is changed.

A single illustration: The appearance of Napoleon beyond a doubt as definitely changed the course of the French Revolution as the direction of a river is changed by dredging a new channel. Study the general economic and political conditions preceding, yet they do not fully explain the event. The sudden emergence of this man must be considered and the contents of his mind understood. Now, Sloane, whose studies in the life of Napoleon are known to students, says, "The greatest cataclysm of history" (he wrote before 1914) "may be explained in a measure by the fact that the young Napoleon devoured *Plutarch's Lives*."<sup>23</sup> Here is the intellectual in the life of an individual asserting itself apart from any known economic presence. It is Hegel's thought of the idea possessing the big man who becomes the motor power in history.

Another aspect of the idea in the individual life is

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<sup>23</sup> William Sloane, *The Substance and Vision of History*, *American Historical Review*, January, 1912.

seen in the persistence of certain ideas as expressed by exceptional lives.

A statement which has become a maxim, in political philosophy, is, "that man is by nature a political animal." These words, written by Aristotle have passed into the heritage of mankind. Another illustration less familiar is that of Plotinus. He exerted, through a Latin translation of his writings, a profound influence upon Augustine, and through him upon the thought of the Western world for a thousand years. As a recent writer has said: "It was in fact the most decisive fact in the history of Western European civilization that Plotinus founded his school at Rome rather than at Athens or Alexandria; for that is how Western Europe became the real heir to the philosophy of Greece."<sup>24</sup>

Further, there are ideas given to the world by daring thinkers and which may be traced in constructive achievements that add to the knowledge and convenience of mankind.

Those who emphasize the physical form of energy in history are fond of quoting the saying that "necessity is the mother of invention." But this is only a half truth. For, as has been said, if necessity is the mother, curiosity is the father of invention. There is nothing to indicate that the Polish priest Copernicus, living on the bank of the Vistula River, was under any physical pressure when he made a slit in the wall of his house and observed the movement of the heavenly bodies. And the wonderful story of astronomy since his day reveals intellectual curiosity rather

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<sup>24</sup> *Legacy of Greece*, p. 92. Oxford University Press, publishers.

than economic necessity. Yet, theoretical and inquisitive as this is, the history of sea power in recent centuries has been shaped in a measure by the use of astronomical truths in navigation.

Moreover, germinal ideas are sometimes applied in ways other than dreamed of by those giving to the world the ideas.

This is a perplexing fact in history, yet illustrations of this fact are easily found. For example, consider Darwin's central idea in his *Origin of the Species*. When the World War came, the military writer Bernhardt was discovered. He stood forth as the intellectual champion of the Prussian military party. His task was to supply a philosophical and historical justification for the aggressive military conduct of his government. To do this he sought "nature's sanction" for warfare. This sanction he expressed in the familiar sentence, "War is a biological necessity." But the interesting thing about this sentence for the student of history is its context. A recent writer has quoted his context: "Wherever we look in nature we find that war is a fundamental law of evolution. This great verity, which has been recognized in past ages, has been convincingly demonstrated in modern times by Charles Darwin."<sup>25</sup>

Here, indeed, is the irony of history, and an irony as poignant as can be imagined—the quiet, reticent, peaceable, semi-invalid Darwin, who had no interest in the "drum-and-trumpet" attitude to life, used by a militarist as part of a propaganda culminating in

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted by J. Arthur Thomson, *Animate Nature*, vol. 1, p. 308. Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

the flash, clash, and crash of the World War! What makes the irony more bitter, is the fact that the Prussian writer was justified in quoting Darwin, although the quotation was used in a way never dreamed of by its author. For, it must be admitted, that in his generation and the generation following, most thinkers who accepted Darwin's answer placed the emphasis upon "the survival of the fittest" as a cruel and inevitable fact in nature. In doing this, they did furnish "nature's sanction." Bagehot said, in explaining the Darwinian theory, "If *A* was able to kill *B* before *B* killed *A*, then *A* survived. And the race became a race of *A*'s inheriting *A*'s qualities."<sup>26</sup> Huxley spoke of nature as a huge gladiatorial show. William James said: "Visible nature is all plasticity and indifference. . . . To such a harlot we owe no allegiance."<sup>27</sup>

Recent thinkers, however, give the words "survival of the fittest" a broader and more beneficent meaning. The struggle to become fit as well as the struggle of the fittest is seen in nature. The struggle to become fit reveals cooperation along with competition. In fact, Darwin's explanation of the fact of evolution no longer receives the unqualified indorsement that it received from most scientists of a generation ago. The important thought, however, for our purpose is that Bernhardt supplies evidence to show the use made of an idea in shaping events in history. This

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<sup>26</sup> Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 188. D. Appleton & Company, publishers.

<sup>27</sup> William James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 43. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.



evidence, along with the evidence given in the preceding paragraph, indicates the truth in Hegel's answer, that the idea is sometimes a determining factor in history and not merely a conditioning influence.

There remains the third form of energy—the spiritual. The question is, What evidence is there that this form of energy shapes historical events? This evidence, it may be granted, is not handled by the historian as easily as the evidence in support of the physical and intellectual. As said earlier in the chapter there seems to be more of the physical than of either the intellectual or spiritual; also the spiritual lies deeper than either the intellectual or physical. For these reasons the search for the evidence needs to be made more carefully. Yet the evidence is in history, and when found is seen to be quite as convincing in support of the spiritual answer as any evidence in support of either the physical or mental answer to the Why?

To begin, let us fall back upon the word “tendency,” and say that evidence in support of the spiritual is found in certain tendencies existing in history.<sup>28</sup>

In this respect the evidence is like the evidence in support of the intellectual. The difference is that evidence in support of the intellectual is found, as certain ideas are seen to characterize given periods of history; the evidence for the spiritual is found as

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<sup>28</sup> Shailer Mathews, *The Spiritual Interpretation of History*, Harvard University Press, publishers. The author stresses the spiritual as a tendency in history rather than events. It would be well to read this book along with Seligman's *Economic Interpretation of History*.

certain ideals are traced, not in a given period of history, but over a long stretch of history. To say this is to assert that in history there are tendencies seemingly more than anything which can be stated in terms of the mental or physical. If this be so, it seems reasonable to believe that in history there is a form of energy which is spiritual and which at times acts as a determining factor. For example, think of the ideals that have played a part in history. Select the ideal of justice, which some moral philosophers claim is the highest possible expression of the ethical, higher even than love.<sup>29</sup> The story of the struggle for justice during the last two thousand years fills many a page of history. The story has in it the pressure of the economic and the light of the mental as conditioning influences. But to really understand this story the warmth of the spiritual must be felt as the determining factor.

Closely allied to the story of ideals in history at large, is the emergence of ideals in the history of nations.

Fichte in the hour of Germany's awakening to the meaning of nationalism declared that "the first original and truly natural frontiers of states are unquestionably their spiritual frontiers."<sup>30</sup> What he meant was that the ideals not the ideas give to a state its meaning. Mazzini had this thought in mind when with keen discrimination he said that the French Revolution as a movement within the French

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<sup>29</sup> See *Altruism*, G. H. Palmer, closing chapter. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Rose, *Nationality in Modern History*, p. 34.

nation was destined to fail because it was based upon a declaration of the rights instead of the duties of men.<sup>31</sup> The determining factor was an idea not an ideal, for the idea makes clear our rights, whereas the ideal causes us to feel our duty. Although the ideal fails often enough in the life of a nation, it does occasionally emerge triumphant, and in doing so furnishes material for a nation's most glorious history. Englishmen for all time will recall the words of Lord Mansfield in the "Somerset Case": "Slaves cannot breathe in England. If their lungs receive our air, that moment they are free. They touch our country and their shackles fall."<sup>32</sup> Citizens of the United States will offer no apology for the war of 1898 that resulted in abolishing the misrule of Spain in Cuba and the Philippines. The story of this brief struggle is the story of national altruism untouched by selfish interest. Political leaders also at times reveal this spiritual energy. The noblest words about Gladstone were spoken by his political opponent, Lord Salisbury, when he said: "He kept the soul of England alive."<sup>33</sup> Such traditions, whether of the individual leader or of collective action by the nation, like the burning bush seen by Moses, are aflame with spiritual splendor. To attempt an explanation of these national experiences in terms of the physical or mental would be as useless as to describe a sky at sunset by a statement about electric waves.

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<sup>31</sup> Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*, chap. i.

<sup>32</sup> "Somerset against Stewart," May 14, 1772. Lott's Reports, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> John Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, vol. i, p. 5. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Evidence of the spiritual as dominant is also seen in certain movements within society.

Consider the movement in the eighteenth century in England under the leadership of John Wesley and known as Methodism. Many students of literature believe that the most significant literary or historical document produced in England during the eighteenth century is the *Journal of John Wesley*. Read the *Journal* as the life story of a great man; also in connection with one of the most remarkable movements of modern times. The man revealed in the *Journal* is more than a dreamer or enthusiast, although he was both. As the name of the movement he inaugurated suggests, he was severely methodical. Also, as we should say to-day, he was rigorously scientific. The world was his parish; it also was his laboratory. No physicist or chemist at work in his laboratory is more persistently experimental than was John Wesley as he wrought out his convictions in the light of his experience. Now, it is a commonplace of historical study that this movement had a profound effect upon the political, social, and economic life in England during the eighteenth century. Some historians even assert that it was this movement under Wesley that prepared England to undergo the readjustments of the Industrial Revolution which began near the end of the century with the use of steam. By doing this England was saved a catastrophe such as the French Revolution.

But the question is, what was this movement? With this question in mind read the *Journal*, and give it the eighteenth century as a setting. At once it is

seen that it was a many-sided movement. It had a profound effect upon the manners of the people as it encouraged what someone has called obedience to the unenforceable. Likewise it influenced the educational life of the people, as it awakened in hitherto dormant minds an interest in better things. Further, it influenced economic conditions and reached neglected portions of the population and improved their living conditions. These things and many more may be said about the movement. But the real word about the movement has not been spoken until you pass beyond the social, educational, and economic, and find the explanation in the spiritual. This was Wesley's understanding of the movement. He had eyes that looked out upon actual conditions, but these conditions he would change for the better by bringing to play upon them spiritual energy. A single entry in the *Journal*—and in varying forms it is found on many of the pages—is, "My heart was so enlarged to declare the love of God."

There is one more kind of evidence which, could it be accurately evaluated, would be found more potent in support of the spiritual than any other kind of evidence mentioned. This is the evidence found in individual lives.

Such evidence has received much attention in recent years from the psychologists. The ablest study of the spiritual in individual life is probably found in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James. Yet, scholarly and suggestive as these lectures are, they somehow miss the thing they seek; at least, they contribute little of value for the historian. Because

of a hearty appreciation of the contributions made by this scholar in other of his writings there is reluctance to criticize this most quoted of his writings. Nevertheless, it seems to me odors as of gases from a laboratory are detected rather than the smell of pure, fresh air from the hills of life. The reasons for this are readily seen. He frankly states that he will seek his evidence in lives that are pathologically abnormal. Now, the study of such lives may yield valuable results for the psychologist, but it has little value for the historian. The odd bodies—the Methuselah's have less and less interest for the student of history. Moreover, James's definition of religion is restricted to the experience of the individual in solitude. He says: "Religion . . . shall mean for us the *feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.*"<sup>34</sup>

This is a radical defect in James as it is of most recent thinkers who have dealt with the psychology of religion. One place to examine any truth is in the institution that exists for the expression of that truth. A truth that is political, educational, or domestic, needs to be examined in the institutions of the state, school, or family. Aristotle examined one hundred and fifty-eight constitutions of states and found the evidence to support his proposition that man is by nature a political animal. Likewise, the spiritual needs to be examined in the institution of the church. Not all of the spiritual is found in the church, any

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<sup>34</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 31, Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.

more than all the political or educational are found in the state or school. But to ignore the institution and seek the truth in the solitude of lives that are abnormal is unscientific, notwithstanding the use in many instances of a forbidding scientific terminology. As regards James, his colleague, Josiah Royce explains this defect when he says: "James supposed the religious experiences of a church must needs be conventional, and consequently must be lacking in depth and sincerity. This, to my mind, was a profound and momentous error in the whole religious philosophy of our greatest American master in the study of the psychology of religious experience."<sup>35</sup>

To correct this error by finding the spiritual in the lives of the nobodies and everybodies as expressed in the church as an institution is a task awaiting the trained historian. He need not attempt the impossible task of finding the spiritual embodied in the church at large. Rather let him look with imagination upon the church that stands on the village green, by the cross roads in the country, on the side street of the city, as well as the imposing edifice, and he will find abundant evidence of the spiritual in the lives of humble men and women who in these churches worshiped God and through these churches served their fellowmen with a spendthrift magnificence. To be sure, those of our present-day historians who persist in writing history with a sneer as regards the spiritual will find much of pettiness and narrowness. But, if these writers will only use the scientific method

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<sup>35</sup> Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. i, p. xv. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers,

and seek to understand what a thing is, by actually knowing what a thing does, they will find symbolized in these church walls something that goes beyond anything stated in terms of the physical and intellectual.

Also there is evidence of the spiritual as a form of energy in the exceptional lives of religious leaders.<sup>36</sup>

As an illustration let us select the experience of the apostle Paul on the roadway near Damascus. This experience is recorded by the historian Luke in the book of Acts, and is mentioned by the apostle himself in his Epistles. One thing that impresses a candid student of history who reads this narrative, also the Epistles, is, that here is good source material. The historian Luke was able accurately to record this experience because he heard from the apostle himself the explanation. He did not record mere gossip or hearsay, as Herodotus so often did. But as the traveling companion of Paul, on two occasions as mentioned in the narrative, he listened to him tell his experience and explain its meaning. His narrative may be likened to Madison's *Journal of the Constitutional Convention*. The young statesman was present in the Convention and wrote down some of the words he heard the members speak. Luke was with Paul and recorded what he heard him say. There is as little reason to doubt the accuracy of Luke as to doubt the accuracy of Madison.

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<sup>36</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. The Macmillan Company, publishers. A rational and historical study of mysticism, and a much more suggestive work for the historian than James, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences*.



Another thing about this experience is that Paul, who claimed to have it, lived a normal life. His life was exceptional but not abnormal. He was a spiritual genius, but not a restless wanderer on the higher levels. He was neither a fanatic nor a recluse. He did not subsist on scanty fare, indulge in long vigils, inflict painful mutilations on his body, or shun the world. He lived as other men lived and in the midst of men. Had he lived in the Middle Ages, he would have looked with contempt upon the strange and selfish actions of many monks. There is no material in his life for a study of abnormal psychology. While his conversion is remarkable, it belongs to a sensible, wholesome man—a rationalist of the supernatural.

Again, this experience changed the apostle's life. Moreover, it changed his life for the better. Measured by service rendered, his life is among the most beneficent of which there is any record. He entered the strategic centers of Cæsar's empire and planted or fostered the new religion of light and love. He lived a life of unremitting toil, he suffered untold hardships, and he counted no sacrifice too great. The change in his life which led him with sublime abandon into unselfish service he believed could be traced back to the experience on the roadway near Damascus. In the retrospect of the years, standing in the presence of the king, he tells the story of his experience and closes with the noble words: "O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."<sup>37</sup> His life was so magistral that he made history, and of an ennobling kind, as few, if any others, have made it.

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<sup>37</sup> Acts 26. 19.

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The history was made because of his religious experience.

More than this, as a pioneer he made it possible to make marvelous history after he was gone. Historians recognize in the first four centuries a period as remarkable as any in history. For in this period spiritual energy was released that helped hurl the world's course right. In the brilliant essay by Doctor Shotwell, quoted in a former paragraph, is this striking statement: "Talk of revolutions! No doctrines of the rights of man have caught the imagination with such terrific force as these doctrines of the rights of God, which from Paul to Augustine were clothed with all the convincing logic of Hellenic genius and Roman realism.<sup>38</sup> This, it seems to me, is a true statement. But involved in this statement is the fact that this revolution which extended through four centuries and made such significant history is connected in its early stage with the history of a man who believed he had experienced in his life an influx of spiritual energy.

There remains one thing more to notice, namely, the qualifications possessed by Paul, which enabled him to interpret his own experience. For let us remember that in the narrative is Paul's interpretation as recorded by Luke, not Paul's experience as interpreted by Luke. Now, it is evident that Paul was a man of unusual mental equipment and so peculiarly qualified to interpret his own experience. In this respect he was unlike many. For too often

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<sup>38</sup> J. T. Shotwell, *Introduction to the History of History*, p. 322. Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.

these peculiar experiences are connected with lives that have a hectic flush upon them. Not so with Paul. He was a university graduate. He took post-graduate work with Gamaliel. He traveled widely and met different kinds of people. His feet he kept on the ground as he battled with reality. In the day time he made tents with his hands and in the night time used his hand to write letters that will be read as long as man thinks. To-day there are thoughtful people the world over who believe that this bow-legged, nearsighted, bald-headed, short-of-stature and high-of-brow little Hebrew, was the greatest imperfect human that ever walked the earth. This is the man who told his story, and Luke, who heard him, recorded in the book of Acts what he heard.

Our answer, then, to the question, What? as regards evidence in support of the spiritual as a form of energy is that it exists in history, and, like evidence in support of the physical and mental, is of different kinds: the presence of spiritual ideals as tendencies in history at large; the exceptional moments in the history of nations; the great movements in society, which are more than any explanation in terms of the physical and intellectual; the experience of individual lives, most of them obscure and revealed in the work of the church as an institution, a few of them commanding, such as the life of the apostle Paul. This last kind of evidence, on the whole, has the most value for the historian. This personal-experience evidence, found in the life of a commanding personality, stated as a proposition is as follows: In history there is the record of personalities so great as revealed in their

life-work, that any testimony they offer about themselves must be given added weight because of their greatness. Paul is such a personality. He declared that the determining factor in his life was the influx of spiritual energy which he believed was transcendental. Further, he risked his career upon this conviction and lived accordingly. Moreover, his life as lived made history and started in motion energy that made much more history. Because of these facts it is not good form to trifle with the testimony of Paul. To do so is to make oneself ridiculous.

To gather up the thought of this chapter in answer to the question, What is history? In history the three forms of energy are found. The conditions under which these forms of energy are revealed in the events of history correspond to the conditions under which they exist in the lives of persons. But these events do not furnish proof that any one form of energy is the determining factor to the exclusion of the other two factors. Rather, each form of energy may be found in a considerable number of events as the determining factor. This being so, each of the answers given by Augustine, Hegel, and Marx contains truth, but not all the truth.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ASSUMPTIONS

How do the forms of energy—spiritual, intellectual, and physical—operate to create the events of history? Do they so operate that, as the events they create are described and compared, certain assumptions are made reasonable which serve as guiding principles or laws in history? This is the question of the second chapter, but asked from another angle. It is a big question, about as big as any question that can be asked about history. Nevertheless, big as it is, it needs to be considered, if we are to catch a glimpse of the meaning of history.

Before the plunge is taken in the attempt to find the answer, it will be well to pause for a moment and say something about the word "event" as used in history, for, according to the question, if laws exist in history, they will be found as events are described and compared. Now, strictly speaking, the historian uses facts but deals with events; that is, facts are grouped to form the event, and it is the event which he describes and compares with other events. A saying has come down from the days of Hecataeus that "history is concerned not with the past as a whole, but only with as much of it as accounts for the present." This is a true statement, but, after all, too general to be of much value. For the events of the past that help to account for the present are countless in num-

ber and varied in kind. A significant document, an outstanding personality, a unique invention, a traceable idea or ideal, a nation emerging, expanding or declining, a military campaign, a social movement, a political revolution—these are some of the kinds of events that are found in the past.

A glance at this partial list indicates that events vary greatly as measured in space and time. An invention, say Newcomen's engine, is a small thing in space—a mere toy as compared with a modern engine; a war fought on oceans and continents is a stupendous thing in space. Yet the steam engine and the war are alike historical events. A historic document, let us say, the Magna Carta, measured in time is small indeed, being dated for a given year; a religious reformation such as that under Luther, measured in time is a huge thing, covering a generation at least. Yet both the document and the reformation are events, and each of them helps to account for the present.

Further, as the student goes behind the scenes and sees the great historian at work he discovers that the size of the event in time and space is determined in a measure by the historian; that is, in staking off the event he enjoys wide latitude in driving the stakes. The rigorous historian of antiquity, Polybius, chose as his event the expansion of Rome into a world power during a period of fifty-three years. Why did he begin the story of the event in a certain year? He tells us he began when he did because in that particular year there was a change in rulers. A purely arbitrary starting point. Gibbon grouped a thou-

sand and more events to form a single mighty event—the decline of Rome. Why did he end the story in a particular year? He says in his *Autobiography*, “So flexible is the title of any history that the final era might be fixed at my own choice.”<sup>1</sup> Yet there are two rules that need be followed in addition to the general rule of Hecataeus: One is that the facts grouped to form an event shall express differentiation, that is, present an event unlike other events. The other rule is that the facts grouped shall express integration, that is, be so related as to suggest unity and thus justify the treatment of them as a single event.

With these thoughts about the meaning of an event in the historical sense, let us repeat our question, which is: Do the forms of energy—spiritual, intellectual and physical—so operate to create the events of history that as the events are described and compared certain laws of history are established?

A hundred and more years ago Kant had this question in mind when he declared that a Kepler or Newton was needed to find the law of the movement of civilization. This declaration indicates that he believed such a law existed; also that the law could be discovered. His belief has been shared by others both before and since his time. In our day historical scholars differ about the form of energy which is the determining factor in history. But there is agreement among such scholars that underlying this energy in its operation is law. In fact, a cardinal doctrine in the creed of every historian to-day is that the actions

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<sup>1</sup> *The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon*, Smeaton ed., p. 159.

of man, no less than the things in nature, are capable of such descriptions as to make reasonable certain assumptions which serve as guiding principles or laws.

Notice, however, the use of the word "description," for it is well to remember that a law, whether in nature or human nature, is simply an explanation or description based upon observation or experiment. There is nothing in history or nature due to law. Whatever exists is the result of some form of energy. Law is a term used to designate the description of the energy at work. In history, as we have seen, facts are grouped to form events, and as the facts forming the event are described in their relation and compared with the description of the relation of facts in other events, certain assumptions become reasonable which serve as guiding principles or laws for the interpretation of history.

Still, no Kepler or Newton has appeared to do for history what these intellectual giants did for the physical sciences. Probably no such intellectual pathfinder ever will appear. For the task of finding law in history is relatively more difficult than the task of finding law in nature. This is so, among other reasons, because the scientist deals with the here and now, the historian with the there and then. The scientist has his eye on an object in the present; the historian handles the record of an object in the past. But of this something more later. Yet, owing to the change in conditions under which the historian does his work to-day, vastly more is known of the operation of the different forms of energy than was known



a generation or more ago. Because of this he is able to describe more accurately the processes. These descriptions may not enable him to demonstrate law in history with the precision that the scientist demonstrates law in astronomy, physics, or chemistry. But they do enable him to hold firmly certain working assumptions.

As indicative of the advance which has been made in the direction of a better understanding of the processes of history, recall three attempts which have been made to state the law or laws of history. Almost a century before Kant the Italian philosopher Vico believed he had come upon the guiding principle, which he called the "law of reflux." About a generation after Kant the French sociologist Comte thought he had come upon the guiding principle in his famous "law of three stages." In our day an historical scholar in America, Cheyney, has given what he calls a tentative formulation of law in the form of six statements, which seem to him to be facts in the processes of history. These are the following: continuity, impermanence, interdependence, democracy, free consent, moral progress."<sup>2</sup> A comparison of this later effort by Cheyney with the earlier efforts of Vico and Comte, show in a striking way the advance in historical study as regards this profound question of law in history. The advance is not seen in the fact that Vico names one law, Comte three laws, and Cheyney six laws. Rather in the fact that the efforts of Vico and Comte are more philosophical than historical,

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<sup>2</sup> E. P. Cheyney, "Law in History," *American Historical Review*, January, 1924.

whereas the effort of Cheyney is more historical than philosophical. History as such can say more to-day than it was possible for it to say in earlier days.

The reasons for this advance are easily understood. One reason is that the historian is feeling the steady pressure upon his work of the other sciences. The achievement of the physical sciences in the last generation is almost beyond exaggeration. The element of chance, in theory at least, has been banished from nature. The wind no longer bloweth where it listeth; thunderbolts do not come out of the clear blue; waves of the sea are not tossed to and fro capriciously; devastating plagues are not mysterious acts of Providence. Likewise in history. Every event comes in the "fullness of time." The fortuitous and capricious are slowly fading out from the page of history like a photographic negative exposed to the light. Every event in history, could we understand the relation of the facts of which it is composed, would yield an explanation. This is the scientific spirit, and nothing less than this will satisfy a trained historian to-day.

Another reason is the vast increase in the amount of material at the disposal of the historian due to the cooperative work done by scholars in branches of work allied to history. This makes possible comparative treatment which was impossible in earlier days. In the physical sciences the formulation of laws is the result of observation of experiment plus comparison; in history the guiding principle emerges as the result of description plus comparison. In either instance comparison is necessary. For, as one of our philos-

ophers reminds us, "laws are but names we give as the result of experience to the repetitive constancy of temporal events."<sup>3</sup> The "repetitive constancy," however, is seen only as ample comparison is possible. To state it in another way: as the processes of the past are recaptured descriptions are possible, as the number of these descriptions multiplies the value of the comparison is increased. For example, a supposed law in history and one of the six named by Cheyney is that of the impermanence or mutability of empires. To describe with reasonable accuracy (were this possible) and compare the downfall of six empires makes more reasonable this seeming law of mutability than to base the law upon a less accurate description and comparison of two empires.

One other reason is the use by the historian to-day of the scientific method. This, in the last chapter, was defined as the attempt to know what a thing does that we may understand what a thing is. The value of this method is so self-evident that it would seem as though it always had been used by historians. Yet, such is not the fact. To be sure, this method is not a discovery of our day. Scholars employed the method long before the expression was used. Nevertheless, only in recent times has this method been considered indispensable in the prosecution of historical work. As an illustration of this, recall Hegel's lectures on the *Philosophy of History*. In his masterly "Introduction" he answers the Why? as he unfolds his seminal thought, that the intellect and its

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\* Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith That Enquires*, p. 41. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

logical process is the determining factor in history. But as you pass to the chapters that follow, in which he attempts to furnish evidence in support of his answers to the Why? there is not the faintest intimation of anything resembling the scientific method. It is this method being used in the handling of material for descriptive and comparative purposes that is causing to emerge, if not laws, at least certain large assumptions which the historian holds with increasing confidence.

Having said something about the meaning of the term "event" as used in history, also something regarding the improved conditions under which the historian does his work as he seeks to interpret these events, let us now consider some of the assumptions which are accepted as reasonable by historical scholars and so serve as guiding principles in the study of history to-day.

While Cheyney names six such assumptions, we will consider only three, although, as will be seen later, our classification is broader and includes his six assumptions. The three we would name are as follows: a sequence of events, a unity pervading all events, and a progress traceable in events. Two of these assumptions—sequence and unity—are accepted by all historians; that of progress is questioned by a few, but accepted by most historians. These assumptions, it seems to me, furnish much light in answer to the question, How do the forms of energy—physical, mental and spiritual—operate to create the events of history? In doing this they lead away to another

assumption which many thinkers accept as the final answer to the question, Why is history?

First, the sequence of events. The historian understands by this something less rigid and precise than is expressed by the words "cause" and "effect." It may be true that every effect has a cause in history as in nature, but the historian is willing to leave this affirmation to others. What he sees in history are events in some kind of sequence, the event of yesterday related to the event of to-day, which in turn will become related to the event of to-morrow. Because of this he prefers to use the more modest term and speak of his assumption as that of sequence of events.

The historian, however, accepts as a guiding principle this assumption, because it enables him to interpret the better those events which he studies. His study of an event, because of this assumption, requires an examination of events that went before. To understand Luther it is necessary to know something about Wyclif and Erasmus. Moreover, he has a pretty definite idea in his mind as to what the relation is between an event and other events that are antecedent. At least he is able to assert as untrue some things about the relation. For one thing, the relation is not one of contiguity, like the relation of pebbles on the beach that merely touch one another. Another thing he can say is that the relation is more than continuity, one event following another, as electrons crowd after one another and form an electric current. Again, the relation is deeper than interconnection of the rails of an old-fashioned rail fence that overlap and in doing so are held together. Per-

haps the word that best expresses the relation of events in a sequence, is the word "intercohesion." Events may be contiguous, continuous, and inter-connected, but they are more than this, for they not merely touch, follow, and overlap—they are in fusion. Not until this last conception is reached do we have the modern meaning of the assumption as expressed in the word "genetic." This simply means, in history, that something of what has gone before continues in what comes after.

To be sure, when the application is made to the actual events of history it is found that this assumption has its limitations. For example, the historian is never able to exhaust the meaning of antecedent events that he may fully understand the particular event he is studying. To do this it would be necessary to know origins or first causes. This, of course, is impossible, for, as Hume has shown, a cause is never known, only effects in sequence. Tennyson's thought about the flower in the crannied wall is true of history. Practically the experience of every historian is like the experience of Polybius. He selected his event—the expansion of Rome into a world power during a period of fifty-three years. Then in a genuinely scientific spirit he moved back of his event for a study of the antecedent events. Soon he throws up his hands and confesses failure. That is, he admits that his statement of causes is only relative when he says: "For, if I were to seek the cause of the cause, and so on, my whole work would have no clear starting point and principle."<sup>4</sup> To get anywhere in his-

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<sup>4</sup> Polybius, *The Histories*, book 1, sec. 5.

torical study it is quite as necessary to limit the antecedent events as it is to define definitely the event studied.

Another limitation upon this assumption is in the fact that there is always in the event more than can be possibly found in the antecedent events. This is not because the meaning of the antecedent events is never fully exhausted. Even could all that has gone before as related to the event be known, it would still be true that in the event would be found a meaning not found in the antecedents. This fact needs to be kept in mind by students of history. Whatever may be true in biology as to all life being implicit in the germ cell, it is not true in history. Because of this, the explanation of an event can be too logical to be true. All events in history are the expression of energy that is physical, mental, and spiritual, yet the form that this energy takes is constantly changing. In this sense history never repeats itself. The unique finds expression in history no less than in nature, and more often. The mutation theory can be tested in the recorded acts of persons grouped to form events as well as in the growing of primroses.

A further thing to remember is that this assumption has its limitations because of our lack of knowledge of the historic processes. This is seen in the fact that the sequence leading up to an event is usually very complex. An event is never connected with what went before as one link is connected with another link in a chain. History is never as simple as this. Being complex, the historian is never able to say that a given event going before explains the event follow-

ing. He examines, for example, the French Revolution, and seeks to understand how it came to be such a stupendous thing. To do this he moves back to Rousseau and his writings. He finds here something of sequence. But this is not enough, so he looks at the example of the American colonies as it culminated in the Declaration of Independence. He finds himself studying not one but a number of events in the sequence that he may understand this gigantic social and political upheaval.

Also it must be admitted that as regards the sequence of events the historian sometimes finds himself in what seems like a blind alley. This is due to the fact that certain events appear on the page of history without any antecedent as far as the record shows.

A couple of illustrations will make this clear: One of the loftiest utterances in literature is the drama of Job on the pages of the Old Testament. In a very true sense the production of such a literary masterpiece is an event in history. But in what sequence does it belong? Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe can be placed in some kind of a sequence, although the sequence is less easily traced in the appearance of a genius treated as an event than in other kinds of events. But of this drama of Job we have no faintest suggestion of sequence. Again, what is the sequence of events that explains the glorious outburst of life in Greece during the fifth century? Scholars have made many guesses. But they know there is no answer to this question. Gilbert Murray, who seems about as thoroughly saturated with the Greek life of that



wonderful age as any scholar living, says of the people of this period that they "were separated by a thin and precarious interval from the savage."<sup>5</sup> This is but another way of saying that as regards this dazzling epoch in human life there is no sequence of events to guide us in its interpretation.

Nevertheless, the modern scholar holds to this assumption as a guiding principle. Events, he believes, never come full-orbed from the brain of Jove. The failure to find the antecedent events in sequence, as in the drama of Job and the Golden Age of Greece is due to our lack of knowledge rather than to any defect in the assumption. Whenever the events antecedent to the event studied are known they are always found to be in sequence, and so help explain the event. Or, to state it in another way, there is no event in history that exists in isolation, if the antecedent events are known. For these antecedent events being in sequence give meaning to the event that follows. This simply means, as has been said, that in history something of what has gone before continues in what comes after.

The second assumption is that of unity pervading all events. This, no less than the assumption of sequence of events, is accepted in some form or other by all historians to-day.

As understood by the historian this thought of unity is easily stated. For him it means the relation of every event in history to every other event in history.

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<sup>5</sup> *Legacy of Greece*, p. 14. Oxford University Press. Used by permission.

In any event anywhere and any time he finds something which connects it with events everywhere. The events in history, like plant life in nature, exist in endless variety. But, like the plant life, along with the differences that separate are similarities that unite. Such in few words is the meaning of this second assumption as used in historical study.

No mistake has been made in having this assumption of unity follow the first assumption of sequence. For the thought of events in sequence tends to make reasonable the thought of unity pervading events. As the truth is pondered that every event in history for its interpretation depends upon an understanding of certain events that went before, there arises in the mind, perhaps dimly and vaguely, the possibility of all events being related through an underlying unity.

Sequence of events would seem to be the lesser term, of which unity is the larger term. In the idea of sequence the emphasis is upon time; in unity the emphasis is upon time and space. That is, sequence carries us backward; unity carries us backward and outward; in other words, unity is lateral, and so a wider sequence of events. A much used but not abused metaphor of history is that of the river. This metaphor will suggest the thought of these two assumptions. The sequence of events is the stream of history flowing between parallel and near together banks; the unity pervading all events is the same stream, its banks far apart, the stream having widened into a bay.

While there is a close connection, the fact needs to

be kept in mind that the proof in support of unity is of a different kind than the proof in support of a sequence of events. In support of unity the proof is more philosophical than historical, for a sequence of events the proof is more historical than philosophical. To make reasonable the assumption of a genetic relation between events in history is the peculiar task of the historian. This he does by an examination of given events in relation to their antecedent events. The result is he finds in his own workshop the material for the construction of this great truth. With the truth of unity pervading all events it is otherwise. To be sure, as we shall see later, in addition to the fact of events in sequence, the historian comes upon other facts that support his assumption. Still, he must go outside his own workshop to gather some of his material. Let us notice this material.

There is the fact of unity in nature. The term "nature" is used in its broadest sense as meaning all phenomena including man. The moment this fact is apprehended man finds himself part of a vast unified whole. He perceives that he is related to the forms of nature below him. His physical body is in substance like the ground under his feet; his life is conditioned upon that which comes from the ground; and when his existence ends, his body becomes one with the ground. There is nothing fanciful in the statement of Genesis that man was formed from the dust of the ground. Man also is related to the animals that live about him. In structure the similarity is so striking and constant that many of the achievements of modern science are due to this similarity. Moreover,

the likeness goes beyond physical structure and includes in a measure mental structure. Because of this scholars make much of animal psychology as throwing light upon some of the problems of the human mind.

Now, some will say that this fact of unity in nature, involving as it does man, is utterly unlike unity in a historical sense. What the historian is looking for is a unity in history as he studies man in his social relations. This may be granted. Still, in the act of perceiving the fact of unity in creation the historical scholar takes a step in the direction of unity in history. Surely, this great assumption of historical unity is not made the less reasonable by noticing the fact of unity in the vast field of nature.

He takes another step in the direction of his assumption as he notices the fact of unity in man as distinct from and apart from nature. All human beings are fundamentally alike in physical structure. This is so obvious that there is no need of dwelling upon this thought. But all human beings seem to be alike in mental structure. For example, the monumental work of J. G. Fraser is based upon the similarity of human minds. He declares that there is a comparative anatomy of the human mind as well as of the body. In one of his volumes on the folklore of the Old Testament he devotes almost three hundred pages to stories of the Flood which he has gathered from different parts of the world. Now, it is remotely possible that these stories have a common origin and are variations of one story regarding a Flood in Southwestern Asia. There is nothing inherently im-

possible in the explanation. The probable explanation, however, is, that in remote times and at different places floods came. If this is true, there is striking evidence of the similarity of the human mind as it reacts to similar conditions. This fact of the unity of man also goes deeper than the physical and mental, for it seems to reach down to the spiritual, for this is the meaning of the statement that man is incurably religious.

Now, there is nothing modern about this conception of unity in human nature. Paul stated the truth when he said: "And he made of one every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth."<sup>6</sup> Also, there is the familiar expression of the truth in the words of Shylock: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?"<sup>7</sup>

The historian, however, does not reach the question of unity in history until he passes from nature and human nature to man in society. Here he finds certain facts that bear directly upon this assumption of unity. One fact is that social groups anywhere and at any time deal with the same objective world. The conditions under which these groups deal with the objective world are about the same. Also, they are all subject to the same laws. Not far from where these words are being written is a large farm owned

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 17. 26.

<sup>7</sup> *Merchant of Venice*, Act iii, Sc. 1.

by a man of wealth who is making an interesting experiment. The farm is divided into three parts. One part is being worked as farms were worked a hundred years ago, a second part as farms were worked fifty years ago, a third part is being worked with the most approved appliances. In the first section oxen are seen, in the second section horses with improved plows, in the third section powerful tractors. The first impression is of marvelous change. As the farm scene is pondered a deeper impression is that the changes are only details, and the fundamental conditions in all parts of the farm are similar. So with the study of social groups in history.

Another fact is the presence in history of certain large aspects of unity due to man's effort. The unity spoken of in the preceding paragraph exists in the nature of things. The unity here spoken of is developed by man himself. Among such larger aspects is that of the state conditioned upon the political and geographical. Alexander the Great as he carried Greek arms and culture sought to realize this kind of unity. Following him, the Roman Empire on a stupendous scale and for the longest period known to history realized something of this unity. In modern times nationalism is based upon unity inherent in man.

Again there is the unity found in religion, thought of in its institutional forms, and expressed in the temple, mosque, or church. The great historic religions—Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity—are illustrations of unity on a large scale and within certain wide limits. Whether the lines that separate

these religions are ineradicable is a question about which scholars differ. Troeltsch, the profound German theologian, believes that the lines that separate are fixed by nature. Christianity may send its missionaries to overcome the crude heathenism of smaller tribes, but he tells us "there can be always only a spiritual wrestling of missionary Christianity with the other world-religions, possibly a certain contact with them."<sup>8</sup> History, it must be admitted in a measure supports this theory, certainly as regards the contact of Christianity with Judaism and Islam. Nevertheless, we have the words of the supreme spiritual genius of the ages, who said: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."<sup>9</sup> But the task will be performed by seeking the unity that underlies all religions.

There is still another fact to notice, which is the unity, at least in the sense of contiguity, that is steadily increasing as the methods of communication improve. This power of mechanical technique to draw people together presents a baffling aspect of unity. For as the contiguity becomes greater the clash of interests seems to become more intense. Up to a certain point it would seem that as human beings know each other better they find it easier to quarrel. The origin of war is probably due to this fact, for the theory that war is a survival in man of his primitive instincts is no longer tenable. The implements of prehistoric man found in the caves and elsewhere are

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<sup>8</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, p. 29. Reprinted by permission of University of London Press.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 28. 29.

those of the chase rather than those of war. He was a hunter seeking food. Not until the paths of men began to converge and then cross did war come. How to utilize this improved communication due to mechanical technique and secure a unity deeper than mere contiguity is one of the stupendous questions of the modern world.

Having mentioned the fact of unity in nature, human nature, and civilization, there is unity of a still deeper kind which should be considered. For want of a better term we shall call this the philosophical evidence at the disposal of the historian. By this we mean that certain significant truths in history make almost inevitable the conviction regarding unity.

The first truth to mention is that of law in history. The awakened interest on the part of historians in this philosophical aspect of history is most encouraging. This truth, to be sure, must not be pushed too far. History as regards its laws does not rest on as sure a foundation as science. Still, if there are laws in history—and the evidence seems almost conclusive—then it becomes less difficult to affirm unity as one of the laws.

A second truth to emphasize in these days is the harmony of all truth. This means that truth is never contradictory. More than this, truth is always complementary. Discover one truth and it adds to the meaning of other truths. Slowly and gradually a glorious synthesis is taking shape. It is the realization of this fact that inspires the noble army of truth-seekers. The real basis of their work is the convic-



tion that any truth, and from whatever source, makes clearer an underlying unity. If there is a clash, it is caused by error.

Still a third truth, of which much was made in a former chapter, is the timeless element in history. The three forms of energy—physical, mental, and spiritual—find expression in an infinite diversity. Yet running through this diversity is an unchanging something that reveals unity. Let the event assume any form; let it be ever so remote in time; nevertheless, it is always a contemporary event in the sense that man always understands the event, if the details forming it are known to him. This is a wonderful truth that for its appreciation requires some imagination. If appreciated, this truth causes the mystical to hang over history like the soft haze that hangs over a calm sea in the stillness of an autumn day.

Another truth which carries us into the realm of the ethical is that when man wrongs his fellow man both suffer. In history the story of the relation of conquering and conquered peoples is profoundly significant. This story, whenever told, furnishes an impressive illustration of the saying, "that next to a defeat the worst thing that can happen is a victory." Lincoln, with the intense power of a Hebrew prophet, uttered this truth in the closing words of his Second Inaugural. The apostle has the same truth when he declares: "For none of us liveth unto himself."<sup>10</sup> Wordsworth gives striking expression to the truth when he says to a prophet of righteousness who is called upon to suffer:

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<sup>10</sup> Romans 14. 7.

“There’s not a breathing of the common wind  
 That will forget thee: thou hast great allies;  
 Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
 And love, and man’s unconquerable mind.”<sup>11</sup>

Nations, like individuals, that conquer and wrong the conquered seem to have the universe against them; because they violate the moral law which unites all mankind. Our historians may properly enough desire to avoid moral judgments, but they cannot avoid this law of justice.

Connected with this truth of the inexorable working of the law of justice is another truth. This is the truth of the spiritual as giving us the deepest unity in history. When ideas common to man are kindled by emotion and pass into ideals likewise common to men, then unity in its most potent form is revealed.

This kind of unity is easily overlooked by the historian. If he confines his study of history to the economic, geographic, or sociological, he will probably miss this truth. But, if he search diligently for it—say, in the biographies of good men—he will find abundant evidence of its power. He will discover, for example, that a spiritual-minded Englishman in London has more in common with a spiritual-minded Chinaman in Peking than he has with another Englishman in London who cares not for the things of the spirit. Baron F. von Hügel, who writes the Introduction to the lectures delivered by the German philosopher, Ernst Troeltsch, but which were not delivered in person because of the untimely death of the philosopher, quotes from a letter received in 1922.

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<sup>11</sup> “To Toussaint L'Ouverture.”

Owing to the conditions of the World War the German thinker had passed through a grueling experience and had felt a poignant sense of his isolation. But he wrote: "Man, thank God, possesses a second Fatherland from which no one can cast him out. In this other country we are both of us at home."<sup>12</sup> This is because, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."<sup>13</sup>

In this truth of an underlying spiritual unity—deeper than any merely physical or mental unity—is found the hope of overcoming the discords of our civilization. And the historian is performing a duty as in these days he reminds man that one of the unquestioned assumptions of history is a unity pervading all events; the deepest aspect of which is the spiritual element.

A third assumption is that of progress traceable in events. The statement of this assumption brings us to debatable ground over which much lively skirmishing is being done by those interested in historical study. The present situation doubtless represents one of the significant reactions of the World War, for it was only natural that this stupendous upheaval should awaken interest in this profound truth of human progress and compel thoughtful people to re-examine the foundations upon which this belief rested.

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<sup>12</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, Intro., p. xvi. Reprinted by permission of University of London Press,

<sup>13</sup> Galatians 3. 28,

This awakened interest, as shown in the large amount of literature dealing with this subject which has come from the press in the last half dozen years, reveals wide divergence of opinion. Some of the writers who give us their views accept the assumption as an act of faith, a truth belonging to the philosophical side of history, but deny that it can be proved by an examination of events. Other writers reject the assumption, even as an act of faith. This they do, either by vigorously challenging the supposed fact of progress or by leaving the question untouched by failing to make any affirmation. Still others who hold the assumption as a guiding principle, and believe they find evidence to support it, differ among themselves as to just what is meant by progress. To gather up in a few words the present-day divergent attitude of mind, as revealed in the large amount of literature on the subject, a statement like this would be true: Progress is inevitable regardless of conditions; progress is impossible under any conditions; progress is possible under certain conditions.

Before these three attitudes of mind to the assumption of progress traceable in events are considered it will be necessary to have some agreement as to the sense in which the word "progress" is used. For, as has been said, even among those who accept this truth as a guiding principle, there is a difference of opinion regarding the meaning of the word. Perhaps we cannot do better than quote the words of F. S. Marvin, who recently edited a small volume, entitled, *Progress and History*, himself contributing the opening chapter. He says "that while collating the

opinions attached by different persons to the word progress he happened to be walking with two friends in Oxford, one a professor of philosophy, the other a lady. The professor of philosophy declared that to him human progress must always mean primarily the increase of knowledge; the editor urged the increase of power as its most characteristic feature, but the lady added at once that to her progress had always meant, and could only mean, increase in our appreciation of the humanity of others." Then Marvin adds: "The first two thoughts, harmonized and directed by the third, may be taken to cover the whole field."<sup>14</sup>

The above words, it is needless to say, do not give us another definition of progress. Such definitions are about as many as the definitions of religion and history. These words simply furnish us with three distinctive thoughts about progress, but so brought together by the editor as to constitute a blanket thought to be thrown over the word "progress." This general thought has in it three suggestions as to what is involved in the idea—knowledge, power, spirit: knowledge of life, power to use this knowledge, and the spirit to share with others the knowledge possessed and shared. With this general statement before us, let us turn to the three attitudes of mind to the assumption of progress in history.

First is that of the inevitableness of progress regardless of conditions. This attitude is in ill repute just now. Yet its disappearance is so recent and its reappearance so likely that it should be noticed.

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<sup>14</sup> F. S. Marvin, *Progress and History*, p. 7. Oxford University Press, publishers.

As this idea of progress is examined it is found to be based upon the sweeping and optimistic proposition that in man himself is an inherent energy which asserts itself regardless of any pronounced effort on man's part. A rather striking figure employed to express this idea of progress is that of the escalator. Nature, including human nature, is a huge ever moving escalator. All man has to do is to make the slight effort to step aboard this ever-moving platform of life and he will be carried to higher levels of attainment. As the story of this escalator theory of progress is unfolded, say on the pages of Bury, the reader rubs his eyes to make sure that he is really reading what men in these enlightened days have actually believed. For there is nothing more wonderful in the *Arabian Nights* than the story of man's belief in progress as something inevitable regardless of conditions.

This belief, as Bury makes clear, began to grip the minds of men about the time of Francis Bacon and so belongs to the modern world. To be sure, there are suggestions of the idea in the writings of Lucretius. He was the first to use the word "progress" as used in our day. In his famous fifth book, *Of the Nature of Things*, he unfolds, so it is said, the idea of progress as something inevitable. A reading of this fifth book does show that in some respects his conception of progress is modern. The description which he gives of the process by which civilization came is surprisingly up-to-date and in sharp contrast to the view that prevailed in his day.

Nevertheless, it differs from the idea of progress

beginning in the seventeenth century and culminating in the nineteenth century. One difference is in the fact that Lucretius fastened his gaze exclusively upon the past and felt no stirring of spirit as regards the future. His often quoted lines reveal his own attitude of mind:

"To look on all things with a master eye  
And mind at peace."<sup>15</sup>

Now, this is unlike the modern idea of progress as something inevitable. The future with its wonderful possibilities is ever beckoning. No thinker in modern times throws his discussion of progress into the past and present tenses and says with Lucretius:

"Grow clear by intellect, till with their arts  
They've now achieved the supreme pinnacle."<sup>16</sup>

Man has not achieved the supreme pinnacle. On the contrary, he is on the side of a long hill, slowly but surely climbing. There is movement, even ceaseless activity. The future belongs to man with something better on ahead, but it is on ahead.

Although there are suggestions of progress as something inevitable, regardless of conditions, in Lucretius, also in Seneca, the idea as it captured the modern mind dates back no farther than Francis Bacon and the publication of his great work, *The Advancement of Learning*. Yet even in the writing of Bacon the idea lacks much. In antiquity there was a faint, far-away sound; in the seventeenth century the sound has increased in volume, but not until

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<sup>15</sup> *Of the Value of Things*, Leonard trans., book v.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, book v.

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the middle of the nineteenth century has the sound become a hallelujah chorus.

Moreover, a bird's-eye view of these three marvelous centuries makes it easy to understand the development of this idea of progress. The enlargement of the world in space, due to the daring discoveries made in the preceding century; the growing mastery of nature's forces, due to scientific achievement; the vast extension of the world in time due in a large measure to the work of such thinkers as Lyell and Darwin; the warming of the world, due to the noble projects for social betterment—these statements are but the headings for some of the chapters of a wonderful story. So wonderful is this story that some historians think there is no other story of equal meaning on the page of history. The only story, they say, at all comparable, is that of Greece in her glorious days. Certainly, to tell the story is to understand how a sense of power went to the head like new wine, and caused men to believe in progress as something inevitable.

A couple of illustrations will be given. The first is that of Tennyson the poet. A reading of the *Memoir* by his son, also the poetry itself, will bring out the force of this illustration. A young man of twenty-one, he went by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester. The night was dark and he believed that the wheels of the train ran in grooves.<sup>17</sup> A dozen years passed and he wrote the poem "Locksley Hall," which has inspired so many young people. The spirit and thought of this poem are summed up in the line

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<sup>17</sup> Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Memoir*, by Son, vol. i, p. 195. The Macmillan Company, publishers.



suggested by the railway journey: "Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of time." Another forty-four years pass and he writes his second "Locksley Hall." The *Memoir* shows that during these years he was much in the company of scientific men. The thought uppermost in his mind is the new knowledge and its effect upon progress. Something of the early fervor is lacking in this second poem, but there is the same invincible faith in progress as something inevitable. And so he writes:

"Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion  
killed,

Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert tilled.

It may be said that this is poetry and scarcely typical of the more rigorous attitude to progress which must have prevailed as science and industry were extending their sway. Well, turn from poetry to prose and you find the same message. The writings of Galton, Tyndall, Spencer, and many others contain the same exuberant, running-over thought about progress as something inevitable because in the nature of things. Spencer, for example, goes the very limit when he says: "Progress is not an accident, but a necessity. . . . So surely must evil and immorality disappear and man become perfect." Again: "The course of civilization could not have been other than it has been."<sup>18</sup> Tennyson, with his poetic eye on the tiger, serpent, ravine, and desert, is not more gloriously optimistic than this prosaic philosopher.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics*, pp. 32, 233. Rev. ed., 1892.

<sup>19</sup> It should be said that there were notable exceptions; for example, Huxley.

Then came 1914. To revert to the escalator, as someone has suggested, a sign was hung out—"Not working to-day." And the sign is still out. This idea of progress along with guns, battleships, and many other things was thrown on the scrap pile made by the World War. No one quotes the poet or philosopher except with a smile reminiscent of far-away days. Yet the time which separates us from them is but the time since 1914. This is a bit of evidence in support of the assertion that with the outbreak of the World War a new epoch in history began. Still, the facile optimism of those days not far away may return. The discarded parts of the idea may be salvaged from the scrap pile and put together. Owing to the increased value of lumber, stumpage of the timber lands, once considered worthless, is being utilized. With increased prosperity in and mastery over things material, this conception of progress as something inevitable may again do service. For two things known by the historian are the slowness with which the lessons of history are learned and the ease with which the lessons once learned are forgotten.

A second attitude of mind to the assumption of progress is that it is impossible under any conditions.

About the time this idea of the inevitableness of progress went to the scrap pile made by the World War, the idea of the impossibility of progress was rescued from the larger and older scrap pile of history. For this idea has been largely neglected since the days of antiquity. It was discussed and rejected by Augustine in his *City of God*. In its present-day appearance it is but a recrudescence of the old cyclical

theory of the Greeks. A modern garb is given the idea by mentioning the fact that Nietzsche accepted it, also by repeating a remark made by Goethe in his old age in reply to a question asked by Eckermann. The classical denial of progress, however, is in the writings of Plato. None of the modern advocates of the theory proceeds far in his discussion without talking of Plato's cycle of years, with the cosmic surge of life like the ebb and flow of the tide of the sea. According to this thinker of antiquity, history shows progress and regress, but within limits; variation and flux of life's sea within the bounds of its unchanging shores.

Two writers of our day may be mentioned. The first of them, Oswald Spengler, as yet, is little known outside of Germany. But, from reports received his work, *The Decline of Western Culture*, is the literary sensation in his own land. He tells us that in 1911 he was roused from his dream of Darwinian optimism. In 1917 the first of the two volumes appeared. His central thought is that in history there is no continuous development. Instead, there have been eight independent cultures, the earliest being the Chinese and the latest our Western culture, which he dates from the year 800 A. D. These historic cultures show no progress. They are like eight mounds of dirt thrown up on the golf links to serve as hazards and which in the parlance of the game are known as "chocolate drops." An examination of these cultures reveals only historical relativity; that is no truths are absolute, and so true everywhere and at all times. For such elemental facts as time and space meant one thing in Greek culture, another thing in Arabic

culture, and still a third thing in our Western culture. Our Western culture ended around 1800 A. D., for he makes a distinction between culture and civilization. This culture, like the others, after a thousand years passed into civilization, it being a law of history as of nature, that after a ripening growth comes decay. Such are some of the thoughts of this writer.<sup>20</sup>

In one respect this work will prove beneficial. For it will compel our historians to seek laterally for evidence in support of the doctrine of unity, and not be content to find it in a continuity that reaches back from Western to the Greco-Roman. The historians need to be reminded that along with our Western and Greco-Roman civilization, as Kipling would say,—"there are others." Nevertheless, Spengler's denial of anything looking like continuity, also of anything suggestive of unity between and underlying these eight cultures, make us suspicious of his conclusion that indefinite progress is an impossibility.

The other thinker whom we will mention is the scholarly Dean Inge of the Anglican Church. His essay, entitled, "Progress," since its appearance in 1922 has received much attention in England and America. His outlook upon life differs from that of Spengler. In only two particulars have they anything in common. Both of them are in revolt against the optimism of the pre-war period; also, both of them reach the same conclusion about progress, namely, its

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<sup>20</sup> At the time of writing only one volume had been translated. There is a summary by W. K. Stewart in the *Century Magazine*, September, 1924. Also the "Introduction" has appeared in the *Dial* for November and December, 1924.

impossibility under any conditions. A reading of this essay by the gifted Dean shows that he frankly accepts the old Platonic theory of progress and regress in history—the cyclical theory. Further, a reading shows that in this essay there is no thorough-going treatment of the events of history, but some rather dogmatic statements about history. What we really have is a patch-work essay made up of some bits of history sewed together with the thread of the author's Platonic philosophy of life.

This leads him to say some pretty sharp things about this great assumption of progress. For example, in an earlier essay in the same volume he declares that progress in history is a mere superstition, there being no law of progress. As he warms to the attack he announces that "there is not, and cannot be, any progress in the universe as a whole . . . . Any philosophy which postulates either any kind of progress in the universe as a whole, or any part of it, is demonstrably moonshine and not worth discussing." Later on in the volume he indulges in a witticism at the expense of Emerson. He quotes the sage of Concord as saying that "one accent of the Holy Ghost the careless world has never lost," and then remarks, "But I should like to know how Emerson obtained this information."<sup>21</sup>

Well, some of us would like to know where the Dean obtained his information about the universe as a whole, which enables him to deny progress in the world and worlds that constitute the universe. The

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<sup>21</sup> W. R. Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, Second Series, pp. 4, 181. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers. Used by permission.

telescope, spectroscope, and occasionally a meteor furnish us with some meager information. But, as far as I know, there is no available knowledge about moral life in these far-away regions. Then, it may be well to remind the Dean, that, after all, our interest is in progress on this mundane sphere called the earth. Those who study history know how difficult it is to find the evidence making for or against progress. What we really need is a little interpretive light on the actual events of history in this world.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted, that there is much in this old cyclical theory of history with its denial of progress to attract minds of a certain type. The mysterious fact of the timeless element in history, upon which we dwelt in a former chapter, by itself, seems to give credence to this theory. Also, those who are philosophically minded, and indulge in reification to the extent of conceiving of truth as existing in ideal form beyond the range of man's petty and sin-stained life here below, find it congenial to their thinking to interpret the events of history as broken and passing expressions of something which remains forever unchanged. But this cyclical theory makes its strongest appeal to those who possess an ample supply of pessimism. For this theory, when shorn of its philosophical speculations and applied to actual history, is as pessimistic as the theory of the inevitableness of progress is optimistic. Moreover, when a cataclysmic change comes and the fountains of the deep seem broken, it is easy to take refuge in this thought. Those who do so may be unwilling to accept the saying of Voltaire about history: "Adieu:

my compliments to the devil, for he it is who governs the world.”<sup>22</sup> But they are willing to believe that owing to such a destructive, cataclysmic event, the assumption of progress is unreasonable. This, in a large measure, explains the interest at this time in such writings as Spengler’s *The Decline of Western Culture* and Inge’s essay on *Progress*.

Still, it is well to remember that this theory of progress needs to be tested by common sense, which is but another way of saying by experience. If this or any other theory of progress seems to contradict the common sense of the individual, then presumably it is a false theory. To be sure, the doctrine of progress reaches beyond the individual and includes mankind. This being so, it is poor logic to attempt to prove the general by a particular. But, it is also poor logic to affirm the general that is contradicted by a particular. Now, this is the weakness of both theories of progress that have been considered. The theory of progress as inevitable is too easy to be true. Human lives in the struggle for character contradict such rampant optimism. On the other hand, this theory of progress as impossible under any conditions is too dismal to be true. Human lives likewise contradict such deadening pessimism. And what the individual finds to be untrue of himself he thinks is untrue of mankind.

There is the third attitude of mind to progress, namely, possible under certain conditions. This attitude of mind contradicts that taken by Spengler

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<sup>22</sup> John Morley, *Voltaire*, p. 314. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

and Inge. It is less heady than that of Tennyson and Spencer. Probably this statement expresses the attitude of mind of the large majority of people who to-day are thinking about progress in history. But the snapper on the end of the whip of this statement is in the words "under certain conditions," for these words lead at once to the question, What are the conditions under which progress is possible? This suggests the fact that men fundamentally unlike in their thinking may reach similar conclusions. The closing words written by Herbert Spencer in his *Autobiography* indicate how little he had in common with Tennyson as revealed in the poem, "In Memoriam." Spengler declares that Christianity is a product of Arabian culture and that a pious Moslem understands Jesus better than the most devout Christian of our Western world. Should he read the opening essay in the volume by Inge entitled, "Confessio Fidei," he would treat it as worthless. Yet Tennyson and Spencer reached one conclusion regarding progress and Spengler and Inge reached another conclusion regarding progress. So with this third idea about progress. There is large agreement as to the possibility of progress; there is wide divergence as to the conditions. This divergence is expressed in the old question of the form of energy which is the determining factor.

The condition under which progress is possible, say many to-day, is that under the leadership of a kind of intellectual, scientific aristocracy the people clarify their minds and accept the points of modern knowledge, especially in the field of science. If this



is done, all will be well with the world. It would be interesting to assemble the books and magazine articles having come from the press in the last half dozen years and that treat of progress from this angle. A well-written book or magazine article on this subject is read with the same avid interest as a "best seller" novel or prize short story.

From this great mass of recent literature dealing with progress as possible, let us select for the purpose of illustration three writers who in their respective circles are being widely read. They are: H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, and J. Harvey Robinson. One is a novelist, the second a philosopher, and the third an historian. All three of these thinkers are disgusted with the past. They recognize the fact that the inevitableness of progress idea has been consigned to the junk pile. Bertrand Russell, after a brief stay in the port cities of China, where he was enthusiastically received by the forward-looking younger Chinese, says: "For my part, since I came to know China, I have come to regard 'progress' and 'efficiency' as the great misfortunes of the Western world."<sup>23</sup> Carl Becker closes a thoughtful and extended review of Wells' *Outline of History* by calling it "the adventure of a generous soul among catastrophes."<sup>24</sup>

These writers are in agreement regarding the present deplorable condition of mankind because of the failure to make real progress, although Wells does admit there has been some "muddling through." A favorite expression of Bertrand Russell's, that appears

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<sup>23</sup> *Dial*, August, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> *American Historical Review*, July, 1921.

in his articles on the subject is "this job-lot, higgledy-piggledy world." Wells, who is probably the most widely read writer in the English-speaking world to-day, in his latest book (at the time of writing this sentence), entitled *The Dream*, by literary legerdemain shifts the character of his story from the present year to the year two thousand. This present time he calls the Era of Confusion. But if certain conditions are fulfilled, the confusion will disappear and all will be well with the world—at least in the year two thousand. The particular confusion that bulks largest in the mind of this remarkable writer has to do with the relation of man and woman. This latest book leaves upon the mind the unpleasant impression that possibly the mind of this brilliant man is in danger of becoming slightly stained by dwelling overmuch on this problem of the relation of the sexes. Profoundly important as this question is, there are many morally wholesome people who accept the conventions of society regarding the marriage relation without hearing the rattle of chains of bondage. Apart, however, from this particular question, these writers in addition to being disgusted with the past are in revolt against the present.

But, if the past brought us to the brink of catastrophe, and the present means only confusion, with the future it may be otherwise. Their optimism regarding the future is as pronounced as their pessimism regarding the past and present. The difference between these writers and the incurable optimists of the prewar period is in the little word "if." The earlier optimists refused to be troubled by any such

pesky little word. Progress was inevitable, regardless of conditions. Not so these writers. Progress is possible, but the condition must be met, and this condition is intellectual. The indispensable factor of progress is intelligence—the expanding capacity of the mind. If only the minds of men will expand enough to take in the wonderful results of science, then the world will really begin to “spin forever down the ringing grooves of time.”

To illustrate this thought let us turn to the third of the writers mentioned, J. Harvey Robinson. This writer, like Wells and Russell, has so developed his literary talent that it is impossible for him to write about anything in an uninteresting way. Although a teacher of history his influence is not confined to those of his particular profession. His influence is widely felt, especially among thoughtful young people. This being so, he needs to be understood and treated more seriously than he treats cherished convictions of others which he rejects. Two of his books which should be read are *The New History*, written two years before 1914, and *The Mind in the Making*, written two years after 1918. The dates suggest an interesting comparison. In the earlier book he shows in a convincing manner the value of the scientific method as applied to historical events. In the later book he emphasizes the need of sound thinking that knowledge at our disposal may be applied. But the significant thing in the comparison is his having passed through the years between 1912 and 1920 unscathed. In his later book he is as optimistic as Dean Inge is pessimistic.

A single example will indicate his exuberant hope-

fulness. He gives a striking literary turn to the figure of the Seven Seals of Revelation as used by Goethe in *Faust*. He tells us that scholars in the past have unsuccessfully guessed the contents of this book with the Seven Seals. Among such scholars are Augustine and Hegel. But, so he says, the period of futile guessing is at an end, for we know to-day that these Seven Seals are seven great ignorances. These he enumerates as follows: Man's physical nature, the working of his thoughts and desires, the world in which he lives, how he has come about as a race, how he develops from a tiny egg, how deeply he is affected by the often forgotten impressions of infancy and childhood, and how his ancestors lived for hundreds of thousands of years in the dark ignorance of savagery. Then, having enumerated the seven great ignorances, he declares, "The seals are all off now."<sup>25</sup>

Here certainly is glowing optimism. This almost equals Tennyson and Spencer of a generation ago. None of us would weaken the fine appeal made by this writer on behalf of clear, vigorous thinking. Yet, some of us are skeptical as regards the effect of all this knowledge upon progress. At least there is a feeling that this learned historian and others of his way of thinking are in no danger of being criticized for excessive modesty in stating the conditions under which progress is possible. Perhaps it will not be considered rude if we suggest that this thinker, who makes so much of source material in the study of history, turn from Goethe's literary use of the "Seven

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<sup>25</sup> J. Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*, pp. 226, 227. Harper & Brothers, publishers. Used by permission.

Seals" in *Faust*, to the Bible itself and read carefully the original story of the Seven Seals. If he does this, he will find that the story ends with these words: "And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."<sup>26</sup>

This attitude of mind to the assumption of progress is no less defective than the inevitableness of progress and the impossibility of progress attitudes of mind. One reason for this is that it seems to lack any adequate appreciation of the spiritual as a form of energy in shaping the modern mind. As an example of this, take Robinson's statement about the historic sources of the beliefs of the modern mind. He finds four such sources. Perhaps, however, we had better let him speak for himself; "Should we arrange our present beliefs and opinions on the basis of their age, we should find that some of them were very, very old, going back to primitive man; others were derived from the Greeks; many more of them would prove to come directly from the Middle Ages; while certain others in our stock were unknown until natural science began to develop about three hundred years ago."<sup>27</sup>

Now, this statement is true—as far as it goes. The importance of the prehistoric, Greek, Middle Ages and modern scientific as an influence in shaping the modern mind is recognized by students of history. There can be no criticism of a writer who stresses the past and in the directions named. Let there be no

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<sup>26</sup> Revelation 8. 1.

<sup>27</sup> J. Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*, pp. 81, 82. Harper & Brothers, publishers. Used by permission.

misunderstanding at this point. The two assumptions of history already considered—sequence of events and unity—make such emphasis upon the past not only legitimate but necessary if we are to interpret the present. Nevertheless, this statement of Robinson's is misleading, because he states the part as the whole. Bury, in his brilliant work entitled *The Idea of Progress*, as we saw in the first chapter, makes the mistake of treating the modern idea of progress as though it were the only idea of progress. Likewise, Robinson makes the mistake of assuming that the four sources of influence which he mentions are the only or the principal sources of influence operative in shaping the modern mind. This, it seems to me, is a statement so inadequate that it constitutes a misleading statement.

Why, for example, is Christianity omitted? Surely, as it has existed through the centuries and as it exists to-day in its institution, the Church, and in its literature, the Bible, it has furnished the modern mind with some of its beliefs. Doubtless the author would say that Christianity is included in the intellectual heritage, which has come to us from the Middle Ages. But, to imply this is to reveal another "great ignorance" about Christianity as it acts upon the modern mind. Let this gifted author remove his elbow from his desk and actually apply the scientific method. In doing this let him first examine the religion of Christ in its institution the Church. If he will do this, he will learn that millions assemble for worship. Now, let him take one part of the worship, namely the sacrament, which is called the Lord's Supper. What

is the effect of this sacrament upon the minds of those who worship? The psychologist tells us that a sentiment is more powerful in its effect upon the mind than an idea, for a sentiment is an idea emotionally toned. Well, here is thought in the form of sentiment. Also, let him examine Christianity in its literature—the Bible. Think of the number who listen to the Bible read from the pulpit, of the number who read it responsively as part of the act of worship, and of the number who for spiritual nourishment make the reading of a small portion of the Bible a part of the daily routine.

The four historic sources of influence mentioned by this author work for the most part unconsciously in our lives. Of the many millions who worship in the name of Christ and read about him in his Gospels, relatively few know anything about the Prehistoric, Greek, Middle Age, and Scientific. These influences act unconsciously upon their lives. But the religion they profess acts consciously upon their lives. A generation ago, that delightful figure in literature, Oliver Wendell Holmes, himself a scientist, wrote, that the reason he set apart an hour and wended his way to church for worship was that in his soul a little plant called reverence needed watering once a week. For many centuries, and never more so than in this century, human lives have watered this little plant. Certainly, this appeal to the mind through ideas emotionally toned, that is, through sentiment, must have determined in a measure the beliefs of the modern man.

Probably it would surprise our author and others

who insist upon the need of intelligence as the condition of progress to discover that to-day there are many serious-minded and reasonably intelligent people who are more familiar with some of the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, and certain chapters in the Epistles of Paul than they are with the loftiest utterance of Plato, the most learned passage of Aquinas, and the story of the latest discovery in science. But this fact is not mentioned on the pages of this stimulating book, *The Mind in the Making*. Christianity as a stupendous historic fact as it exists in its institution, the Church, and in its literature, the Bible, is totally ignored. This is a serious defect, for historic Christianity furnishes a vast amount of material that sheds much light upon the beliefs of the modern mind still in the making.

The other defect of this attitude of mind to the assumption of progress is that it is conditioned upon a fallacy, at least as old as Socrates, namely, that the more a man knows the better he is. Probably there is no fallacy more difficult to overcome than this. History shows that it has constantly appeared strong and lusty like a new crop of weeds in a field. And here it is again in this new doctrine of progress. Intelligence is the word that these ardent prophets of a new order of things conjure with. Robinson says: "Yes, there is Intelligence. That is as yet an untested hope in its application to the regulation of human relations."<sup>28</sup> Well, the same criticism applies here that applied to the omission of historic Christianity—

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<sup>28</sup> J. Harvey Robinson, *The Mind in the Making*, p. 24. Harper & Brothers, publishers. Used by permission.



the statement of a part for the whole. It is needless to say intelligence is needed. For example, these thinkers need to cease speaking of Christianity in terms of the Middle Ages and make an attempt to understand it as a potent form of spiritual energy in the lives of men to-day.

But, the question is whether intelligence, much as it is needed, is the thing most needed to make progress possible. Again let this suggestive writer and his associates remove their elbows from their desks and test their theory by life itself. Suppose they begin, let us say, by turning the searchlight upon their own inner lives. Then, let them observe lives about them. In reaching truth it is always well to begin at Jerusalem. Having made the start, let them move out in thought to the larger events of history—even to the uttermost parts. This is certainly sound science. Having done this, would any of these ardent champions of progress be able to say that the thing most needed in the world to-day is more intelligence? The stubborn fact that any thinker will bump into, if he is willing to forsake for a moment his bookish attitude, is that in life there is relatively no marked deficiency in knowledge. Sane, thoughtful observers believe that one explanation of the present world situation is that men are in possession of more knowledge than they are willing to apply. They also state, what seems to be an indubitable fact, that the World War was not caused by lack of knowledge.

The need of humanity to-day, if progress is to be realized, is the utilization of the spiritual as a form of energy. What the world needs more than anything

else is an increase in the number of good men. This will seem to some a banal enough remark to make. To insist upon so commonplace a thing as goodness is to give to life a dull, drab color. This may be admitted if life is to be seen through the medium of books, for to write about ordinary goodness is never so interesting as to write about things intellectual—but it is more true to life, and therefore better history and science. These writers mentioned give us a defective doctrine of progress because of the undue emphasis upon the intellectual as a form of energy and their lack of emphasis upon the spiritual as the more potent form of energy. They are moving into the future backward.

Having considered these three theories regarding progress—as inevitable, impossible, and possible—the question is, What are we to say about this third assumption of history? In the first place there has been progress in history, if the term history is used to include the prehistoric. A study of the optimistic literature which declared progress was inevitable shows that the fact bulking largest was the fact of evolution. Now, it is this fact, not any explanation of the fact, whether by Lamarck, Darwin, Weismann, or De Vries, that justifies in a measure this extreme statement. For the picture of creation in terms of evolution does show progress. To be sure, the picture is only a rough crayon in black and white and to be appreciated the observer needs to stand some distance away. A visit to any well-equipped museum, such as the Hunterian Museum in London or the American Museum of Natural History in New York, will furnish the pic-

ture. Evolution, in this large sense, does mean progress.

When, however, history is dealt with in the orthodox manner, as beginning with the recorded acts of men in society, the task of tracing progress becomes more difficult. In fact, there are directions in which it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace progress. In reading Thucydides we come upon the statement that the military limit for the Greek was not reached until the age of sixty.<sup>29</sup> This raises a question about the physique of the modern man. Our military limit is reached at the age of forty. Again, in reading the letters of Darwin, we come upon a letter written to the Dutch scientist Ogle in 1882. In this letter Darwin says: "From quotations I had seen I had a high notion of Aristotle's merits, but I had not the most remote notion what a wonderful man he was. Linnæus and Cuvier have been my two gods, though in very different ways, but they were school-boys to old Aristotle."<sup>30</sup> A statement like this causes us to be modest in affirming that the modern world has registered progress as seen in its ability to produce creative personalities. There is also the question of the mental capacity of the average man to-day as compared with the average man of far-away days. Words like the following written by Henry Fairfield Osborn, author of *Man in the Stone Age*, have a sobering effect upon our minds as regards mental progress:

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<sup>29</sup> *Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides, book ii, sec. 13, footnote, Loeb Ed.

<sup>30</sup> *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. ii, p. 427. D. Appleton and Company, publishers, New York.

"The Cro-Magnon man," he says, "who lived about thirty thousand years ago, was our equal if not our superior in intelligence."<sup>31</sup> As the story of man in prehistoric times, stated in terms of evolution, gives plausibility to the doctrine of progress as inevitable, so these thoughts about man's physique, the ability to produce creative personalities and the mental capacity of the average person, give plausibility to the doctrine that progress is impossible.

Nevertheless, difficult as is the task, it seems to me that progress can be traced in history. This can be done, however, only as the spiritual as a form of energy finds expression in recorded acts on the page of history. For let us remember that, regardless of the particular conditions emphasized, progress can be stated only in terms of the spiritual. The reason for this is that progress always involves personality. All thinkers are in agreement at this point. By personality is meant "a rational subject conscious of itself and of its world as an object."

Now, Christianity in the person of its founder, Jesus Christ, made a distinctive contribution to the thought and the life of mankind in its doctrine of personality. This statement is not made to call attention to a truth in either theology or philosophy, but to point out a fact in history. Strange as it may seem—and there is nothing stranger or more disconcerting—this stupendous fact is missed by most of the present-day writers on progress. The failure to recognize this fact has led so able a historian as

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<sup>31</sup> Henry Fairfield Osborn, *Evolution and Religion*, p. 20. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers. Used by permission.

Bury astray. Robinson, whom we have considered, would never have failed to mention Christianity had he seen this historic fact. Even so influential a philosopher as John Dewey makes the same blunder when he says: "There is not an instance of any large idea about the world being independently generated by religion."<sup>32</sup> For, the Christian doctrine of personality is certainly a large idea, about as large as any idea in the mind of man. This idea, we believe, is the distinctive contribution to the world of Christianity in the person of its founder—Jesus Christ.<sup>33</sup>

This statement of fact, like any other about history, may be tested as to its accuracy. To do this, compare the teaching regarding personality on the pages of the New Testament with the teaching on the same subject on pages written before the appearance of Christianity. So far as my knowledge of antiquity goes, the loftiest single utterance dealing with personality is in the beautiful essay by Aristotle on friendship. But compare this essay with Paul's deathless love chapter in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Likewise, the noblest formal philosophy dealing with personality is in the writings of the Stoics. Yet, there is nothing in the Stoic philosophy that corresponds to the words of Jesus—"One is your Master, and all ye are brethren."<sup>34</sup> Aristotle is intense but restricted; Paul is equally intense but far flung; the Stoics are intellectual but cold; Christ is equally intellectual

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<sup>32</sup> *The Influence of Darwin Upon Philosophy*, John Dewey, p. 3. Henry Holt & Company, publishers. Used by permission.

<sup>33</sup> There is an able discussion of this in *Idealism and the Modern Age*, by G. P. Adams, chap. iv. Yale University Press.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 23. 10.

but humanly warm. The comparison has only to be made to perceive that with Christianity there came into the world something wonderfully unique.

It is this great thought of personality which in history takes the form of spiritual democracy, and which, traced, reveals progress. As such, four truths about the person are found. These can only be mentioned. The first is the worth of the individual as derived from God. The worth of the individual has never been denied. The distinctive truth of Christianity is in the derivation. For a long time the worth was derived from the king; then came the doctrine of his worth as derived from the state; this in turn was followed by the idea of his worth as derived from nature. But these ideas are only steps that lead up to the New Testament idea of worth as derived from God. "When ye pray, say, Our Father."

The second of these truths involved in the central thought of personality is respect due to each person because of what he is in character, not because of anything he has or lacks. A thing is what it does. The greatest act of any person is a good act. There is nothing finer in the universe than goodness. Because of this the final test is character. Trite as this seems, many of the pages of history are filled with the story of the struggle for the recognition of this truth. The teacher ceasing to be a slave, the merchant no longer a mere shopkeeper, the workman to-day insisting upon the respect due him as a man—these are but suggestions of this truth.

The third of these truths is that of responsibility shared. Cheyney, in his statement of law in history,

gives this as one of the six laws. This truth as it gains acceptance may be traced in ecclesiastical history. The history of Protestantism is largely a history of the increasing responsibility assumed by the many. Also this truth may be traced in political history. The story of the modern state is to a considerable degree the story of an increasing share of responsibility on the part of the citizens. John Morley in his *Recollections* tells us that the two tokens of real democracy are the refusal to accept good government as a substitute for self-government and a denial of the claim that the judgment of the few is worth more than the judgment of the many.<sup>35</sup> This second truth is a hard one, but can be accepted if applied to broad ethical questions.

The fourth truth involved is that of duties rather than rights. The inspiring characters of history, likewise the glorious epochs of history are those in which rights fall into the background and duties emerge. Little, if anything, is said in the New Testament about rights; much, if not everything, is said about duties. In our modern world the need is more emphasis upon duties. Josiah Royce, in his book, entitled *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, says: "In brief, the people who have more rights than duties have gained a notable and distinguished ethical position in our modern world."<sup>36</sup> This in barest outline is the fact of progress as it is traceable in history.

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<sup>35</sup> John Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii, p. 141. The Macmillan Company, publishers. Reprinted by permission.

<sup>36</sup> Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, p. 67. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

As we bring this chapter to a close let us return to the question asked at the beginning of the chapter: How do the forms of energy—physical, mental, and spiritual—operate to create the events of history? The answer is that as the events of history are described and compared, the three assumptions of sequence, unity, and progress are made reasonable and serve as guiding principles or laws in history.<sup>37</sup> Now for another question: Do these assumptions lead to a fourth assumption—God? This question we will consider in the next chapter.

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<sup>37</sup> One of the most significant aspects of progress is that of our Western culture, involving, as it does, the Christian doctrine of personality and its relation to the culture of the Far East. There is an exceedingly able discussion of this in *The Political Awakening of the East*, by George M. Dutcher, Chapter VI.



## CHAPTER V

### THE DIFFICULTIES

SOMETIMES a second question answered gives the answer to a first question asked. In this instance, having come upon this stupendous assumption—God—the first question is, Why does the historian, as compared with the poet, philosopher, and scientist, find it difficult, if not impossible, to accept this assumption? The answer is given as a second question is asked and answered, namely, What are the difficulties encountered by the historian as regards this assumption of God in history, not encountered by other thinkers, for example, the poets, philosophers, and scientists?

Before, however, we pass to this second question let us mention certain considerations involved in this assumption. There are, as we have seen, three assumptions which may be accepted as reasonable in the study of history. These are, a sequence of events, a unity pervading all events, and a progress traceable through events. Although this third assumption of progress is challenged by some and misunderstood by others, nevertheless it seems to me to be established by the facts of history. Now, as regards this fourth assumption, it may be said that if the historian were to lift his eye from the page of history and fall back upon the logical processes of his mind, this assumption would seem to follow the three assumptions of sequence, unity, and progress. But this he cannot do

for the simple reason that he is an historian and therefore is required to keep his eye upon the page of history.

Still, it needs to be said that the historian does not refuse to accept as reasonable this assumption of God in history because history yields its meaning apart from any such assumption. For this assumption, at least for the reverent historian, is not a mere intellectual excrescence upon the three assumptions which he accepts—an extravagantly pious wish that is added. Even J. Harvey Robinson, with his exuberant faith in the intellect disciplined by science, finds something in history that eludes his grasp. He says, "Even those of us who have little taste for mysticism have to recognize a mysterious unconscious impulse which appears to be a concomitant of natural order."<sup>1</sup>

If the reverent historian fails to affirm this assumption, it is because the difficulties seem to him such that the affirmation is not justified. These difficulties, however, can be wrongly stated. For example, it is untrue to state that the assumption implies its acceptance by the historian as a guiding principle in his interpretation of events. Bury remarks that "historians have for the most part desisted from invoking the naïve conception of a god in history to explain historical movements."<sup>2</sup> Overlooking the bit of rationalistic affectation in the use of the article "a" before the august word which he spells with small

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<sup>1</sup> J. Harvey Robinson, *The New History*, p. 264. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Bury, *Darwin and Modern Sciences*, p. 255. University Press, Cambridge, England.

letters, the statement is true, for the historian recaptures historical processes as he explains the relation of facts constituting events. That is, he employs the scientific method which we have defined as the attempt to know what a thing does in order to understand the thing.

Suppose, however, regardless of the difficulties, the historian should accept as reasonable this assumption. What would be involved in its acceptance? The answer is, the thought of God in all history. If the historian could select certain portions of history, he might conceivably find evidences of God's presence. But to be an assumption for history all history must be included. For any assumption, whether in history or science, if proven untrue in any particular, thereby ceases to be an assumption. God must be in all history or in none of history. This is so, if for no other reason, because it is demanded by the assumption of unity. To think of God operative in history now and then is as unreasonable as to think of two and two equaling four to-day but not to-morrow. The conception of God outside his universe, who makes his presence felt by intervening in the affairs of men, is no longer tenable. The "piece-meal" or "peddling" view of Providence is rejected by all Christian thinkers. When the psalmist asks the question, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" and then answers his question by saying, "The darkness and the light are both alike to thee,"<sup>8</sup> he expresses the modern attitude of mind.

Involved in this assumption is the thought of God

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<sup>8</sup> Psalm 139. 7,

as the Vast Mind Energy who reveals himself through the forms of energy that create the events of history. Energy, as far as man knows, exists only in three forms—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Like the words and sentences of language which are the varied forms of the letters of the alphabet, the events of history, although infinite in variation, are the manifestation of energy in these three forms. Now, if God is in history, he is the Vast Mind Energy that somehow reveals himself through these events. To state this thought more strongly, any expression of energy anywhere in the universe and so anywhere in history, is an expression of God who is the Vast Mind Energy. It does no violence to our religious convictions to say that the energy revealed in an electron is an expression of God at one level, even as the energy of the Holy Spirit revealed in the goodness of man is an expression of God at another level.

Then our thought of God who is the Vast Mind Energy is of a Being who in his creation is in process of becoming. Such a thought is involved in this assumption. This thought is much stressed in these days by thinkers who ponder the meaning of the august truth of God revealing himself. Yet this thought of God troubles many earnest Christians. For it seems to mean a conception of God as a Being less than infinite. This, however, is not true, for God, we believe, purposes the process. This being so, he is more than the process. All that is meant by the words "in process of becoming" is that God, the Vast Mind Energy, expresses himself through the things of nature and the events of history. These are

always in flux and so never final manifestations of energy. What we find in history no less than in nature is a continuing process. If "the heavens declare his glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork," it must be as a Being in process of becoming. Perhaps the extremely suggestive saying of another will make the thought clear: "God is; the world becomes; he is the Being in the Becoming."<sup>4</sup>

One more thought involved in this assumption is that history adumbrates a purpose. Sequence of events, unity pervading all events, and especially progress traceable in events, make reasonable this thought of purpose in history. But this purpose is only adumbrated. What it is, history does not show. "For it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Yet history indicates a goal on ahead, for it reveals a movement in the direction of a goal. Nature, as man interprets it, culminates in himself. As we pass from nature to human nature, the significant thing is the struggle by man to win his freedom. In history the interesting thing, and about the only thing that is interesting, is this long story of man winning his freedom. Now, this assumption of God in history would seem to involve, necessarily, this thought of a goal toward which man is moving. As Dean Bosworth finely says, "The will of God is the intelligent set of a Vast Mind Energy toward a goal."<sup>5</sup> The apostle

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<sup>4</sup> J. Y. Simpson, *Man and the Attainment of Immortality*, p. 10. Copyright, George H. Doran Company, publishers. This thought is also found in the able work of Bishop Francis J. McConnell, *Is God Limited?*

<sup>5</sup> E. I. Bosworth, *What It Means to Be a Christian*, p. 2. Copyright. The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

saw the goal, but in prophecy not in history, when he said, "Till we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man."<sup>6</sup>

Such are some of the thoughts that inhere in this assumption of God in history, which the historian finds it difficult to accept. Now, it has been said that thinkers other than historians—for example, poets, philosophers, and scientists—accept this assumption. Let us, before considering the difficulties peculiar to the historian, dwell for a moment upon this fact.

The leading poets of our modern world, whose influence is potent in shaping the thoughts of our day, accept as reasonable this assumption of God in nature and human nature. It may seem strange to dwell even for a moment upon the message of the poets in a writing that is dealing with so prosaic a subject as the interpretation of history. Yet, it is well to remember, that the poet who has a message must deal with reality. In fact, when the poet is at his best, that is to say, when he is truly inspired, he deals with reality at a deeper level than either the historian or the scientist. For example, a poet and physicist describe a sunset on the sky line. The poet will call attention to the surpassingly beautiful color effect; the physicist will tell us some remarkable things about the electric waves. Yet, the color effect is quite as much a part of the sunset as the electric wave lengths. Again, a poet and physiologist deal with a human tear. The physiologist informs us that the tear is a watery secretion from the lachrymal glands; the poet interprets the

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<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 4. 13.

pain or sorrow causing the tear. In doing so the poet reaches a deeper level of reality. So let us be done with any foolish shyness about glancing at the poets.

Among the poets of our day whose influence can be traced in our thinking probably most of us would name at once Wordsworth and Browning. Although both of them in a literal sense belong to an earlier generation, yet they seem to have come into their own in this generation. Their influence upon our thinking is explained, in a measure, by the fact that in their stanzas is a mental robustness not always found in poetry. Browning is reported to have said that his poetry was not to be read after a hearty dinner or over a game of dominoes. The same may be said of Wordsworth's poetry. To receive the message of either of these poets the reader must gird up the loins of his mind. Another reason for their hold upon this generation is they are both modern, in that, for the most part, they interpret the commonplace and obscure. But, what most interests us is with these poets anything anywhere in nature has its final meaning in God. It is not necessary to turn their pages to find the thought of God in all creation. Open at any page and the thought of God is found. It is no exaggeration to say that their poetry is drenched with this august thought. With Wordsworth this truth is found primarily in nature; with Browning primarily in human nature.

There is room for only one illustration, and an extreme one, yet, for that reason, the more significant. Browning in the tragic short poem, "Apparent

Failure," visits the "Doric little Morgue" in Paris. Three who had lost in life's battle and committed suicide he sees, "each on his copper couch." Standing by each of the couches he soliloquizes and then ends in a deep utterance of optimism:

"It's wiser being good than bad;  
 It's safer being meek than fierce;  
 It's fitter being sane than mad.  
 My own hope is, a sun will pierce  
 The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;  
 That, after Last, returns the First,  
 Though a wide compass round be fetched;  
 That what began best, can't end worst,  
 Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, the philosophers of our day accept this assumption of God in nature and human nature. The word philosopher, of course, is used broadly. The theologian, also the psychologist are included in the term, as well as the technical philosopher. An interesting phenomenon of the present day is the extent to which thinkers, for example, scientists, are exercising their minds as they give the world their thoughts in philosophical form. But, if one would understand the attitude of mind to this assumption of God let him make the acquaintance of such philosophical writers in the generation just passed as, Fairbairn, Clarke, Royce, James and Troeltsch. These are a few of the thinkers whose thoughts influence the thinking of this day. Among our living writers who are being widely read are Bergson, Bosworth, Hocking, McDougall, Croce and Jones. Not all of the

<sup>7</sup> Robert Browning, "Apparent Failure."



philosophers of our day are clear cut in their acceptance of this assumption. There is the wayward and wandering star in the philosophical sky—Bertrand Russell. His attitude is frankly antagonistic, “for the world is a job-lot, higgledy piggledy affair in which chance has imprisoned us.” Then the fearless and profound philosopher, John Dewey, must be mentioned. Those of us who believe in a spiritual interpretation of history find little in his suggestive pages to warm our hearts although much to stimulate our heads. Still, as a generalization, it is true to say that modern philosophy is declaring its acceptance of this assumption.

A couple of illustrations: Benedetto Croce is a thinker who accepts the Hegelian philosophy which he applies to the interpretation of history. Widely as he is being read in this country, he is being more widely read in Europe. In what is probably his ablest and most-read book, entitled *On History*, he says: “Professing the firm conviction that the hand of God shows itself in history, a hand that we cannot grasp with ours, but which touches our face and informs us of its action.”<sup>8</sup> One can detect the historical training of this thinker in the qualifying clause—“a hand that we cannot grasp with ours.” Still the great affirmation is here. Another illustration: Among the recent books that is profound yet simple, and which can be read only to be reread, is the volume entitled *A Faith That Enquires*, by Sir Henry Jones. Take a few sentences like the following: “The infinite perfec-

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<sup>8</sup> Benedetto Croce, *On History*, p. 291. Harcourt, Brace and Company, publishers.

tion of limitless love actually lives in man.”<sup>9</sup> “The process of evolution culminates in converting man’s natural needs into spiritual ideals freely sought.”<sup>10</sup> “The infinite that we do know and have a right to call just or unjust is the power which manifests itself in the events of the world, material and spiritual in which we live.”<sup>11</sup> Those who are interested in the meaning of history will do well to ponder the pages of this seasoned, humane philosopher.

Also the scientist accepts as reasonable this assumption of God in nature culminating in human nature. The great scientists of antiquity and of times since with scarcely an exception have been men who walked humbly before God. Copernicus was a priest on the bank of the Vistula River in Poland. The mighty Newton found his delight in an interpretive study of the Old Testament prophets. The life stories of scientists of the past generation, such as those of Lord Kelvin, Agassiz, Faraday, and Clerk-Maxwell, are inspiring sermons that lead away to the cross of Christ. Think, for example, of Clerk-Maxwell hastening away from his laboratory at Cambridge University, that he may be present for the observance of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in the little kirk on the Scottish hillside.

Nevertheless, there is a fresh stirring of the wind amid the leaves of the mulberry tree in science to-day. Something very wonderful is taking place that portends much for the cause of religion. Just what this

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<sup>9</sup> Sir Henry Jones, *A Faith That Enquires*, p. 59. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

change is it is difficult to state in few words. Perhaps the change may be suggested by the thought that science is becoming more mystical. The eminent physicist, Soddy, in discussing the mystery of energy falls back upon the words of Paul: "For we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen."<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the change may be suggested by the fact that such a book as White's *The Conflict between Science and Theology* would be unnecessary to-day. For many of our scientists are unconsciously our theologians. The masterly Gifford Lectures, by J. Arthur Thomson, entitled *Animate Nature*, could be given as a course of lectures in the department of theology in any theological seminary.

But the illustration on a large scale of the attitude of science is furnished by the Fundamentalist controversy in America, and, alas, on some of the mission fields in other parts of the world. Those who accept the Fundamentalist position are much concerned about the effect upon the minds of young people of the teaching of modern science in our schools and colleges. The movement is too widespread and represents the attitude of mind of too many earnest people to be treated lightly. There is some ground for concern, for doubtless many of our teachers have failed to appreciate the mental background of the young person coming from the average home. A halt needed to be called. Nevertheless, the Fundamentalist movement as a whole is obscurantist and cannot win the approval of intelligent people who are forward-looking. Still,

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<sup>12</sup> Frederick Soddy, *Matter and Energy*, p. 32. Henry Holt and Company, publishers.

beyond calling a halt upon some rather roughshod methods of teaching science, this controversy has given some of our leading scientists a wide reading as they have affirmed their belief in this fourth assumption of God in nature and human nature. There is nothing more interesting in our day than the way in which our scientists have become champions of religion in the name of science. Among such may be mentioned, Conklin the biologist, Osborn the anthropologist, and Milliken the physicist. A quotation from Coulter, the eminent botanist of the University of Chicago, will show the attitude of mind of these scientists. He says: "It seems reasonable, however, to infer that if inorganic evolution is simply the method by which God molds matter, organic evolution could be regarded as the method by which God develops organisms. In other words, it is all the result of the activities of that all-pervading energy which we have learned to call God. There is no religious difference between creation by law and creation by direct command, if back of it all the Creator is recognized."<sup>18</sup>

Now to return to our question: Why is it that the historian to-day finds it difficult, even impossible, to accept this fourth assumption of God in history? The poets, philosophers, and scientists accept it, but so far as my knowledge goes, few if any first class historians accept this assumption. The historians of antiquity were profoundly impressed by the presence of something in history that transcended man. The words "fate," "fortune," and "providence" are found

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<sup>18</sup> J. M. Coulter, *Where Evolution and Religion Meet*, p. 100. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

in the writings of Polybius, Livy, and others. Plutarch thought of the demons as links in a chain that bound the events of history to the throne of God. Themistocles, after Salamis, exclaimed, "It is not we who have done this." The historians of the earlier Christian centuries triumphantly affirmed their faith in God who revealed himself in the events of history. It was the dominant thought in the writings of Eusebius, Orosius, and Bossuet. Even Vico, the morning star of a new method in historical study, declares that the Providence of God permeates the world of nations."<sup>14</sup> Most of the leading historians of the nineteenth century reverently accepted this assumption. Such scholars as Niebuhr, Droysen, Guizot, Lord Acton, Stubbs, and Ranke may be mentioned. Let me give a couple of quotations: Bishop Stubbs says, "The study of modern history is, next to theology itself, the most thoroughly religious training the mind can conceive."<sup>15</sup> Ranke, sometimes called the historians' historian, says, "Every action testifies to Him, and above all the connection of history."<sup>16</sup> Again he says, "I am enchanted by the loftiness and logic of the development, and, if I may say so, by the ways of God."<sup>17</sup>

But, such thoughts as these are not found on the page of the trained historian of this day. There must be some explanation. While there are historians to-

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<sup>14</sup> Benedetto Croce, *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, chap. x. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>15</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 341. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

day, as in other days, whose convictions lack this great affirmation, still, there is no reason to believe that most of our historians are anything but reverent, devout men. Nevertheless, like some of the scientists of a generation ago, they are placing their thought of God apart from and not as a thought that wells up from the depths of history. Again, the question, Why?

A partial answer to this question can be given as the work of the scientist is compared with the work of the historian. Now, their tasks are alike in that both aim at an interpretation of events, by an explanation of the relation of the facts that form the event. In other words, the task is to interpret processes, "for everything that exists is in process." This is as true of a physicist dealing with the electrons in an atom as of an historian studying the factors that produced the expansion of Rome into a world power. For the historian and the scientist alike seek their explanations in the process. That is, they both employ the scientific method, which we have elsewhere defined as the effort to know what a thing does in order to understand what a thing is.

When, however, the method is applied a difference is seen. In science the emphasis is constantly upon observation and experiment. In fact, in science the method would seem to be to know what a thing does as the thing is observed or experimented with. Superb illustrations of the use of the scientific method in these two ways are found in the lives of Darwin, who within wide limits of space and over a considerable period of time patiently observed, and De

Vries, who, finding the primroses, likewise patiently experimented within the restricted limits of his garden and for many years. Now, the historian is unable to employ the method in either of these ways, the reason being that the historian is never able to have his eye upon his object, for let us keep in mind the truth of the second chapter, that the person is central in history. But the historian can never see this person either collectively or individually. All that he can ever see is a remnant of the person in the form of some record. Darwin, going ashore from the *Beagle*, saw things with his own eyes; De Vries wandering in the fields came upon the "sport" primrose, which he plucked and transplanted in his own garden. Science uses the method observationally and experimentally; history can use it only circumstantially.

Then, another difference is in the objects studied. The scientist, at the level of inanimate nature, deals with things in space, the time element being relatively unimportant; the historian deals with persons in time, the space element being secondary. But it is easier to describe a thing in space than a person in time. Moreover, the scientist deals with quantity; the historian with quality. Physical science is the science of measurement. No achievement of our modern world is more remarkable than the degree to which measurement has been carried. All this, however, is outside of history. The recorded actions of persons are immeasurable. The fact that the scientist deals with measurable quantities in space, whereas the historian deals with immeasurable qualities in time, explains the clearer note of assurance with which the

scientist affirms the assumptions of his science. The historian necessarily lags behind in the discovery of the meaning of history.

Again the element of fixity is more pronounced in nature studied by the scientist, I believe, than in human nature studied by the historian. This seeming fixity lessens as the transition is made from rocks to plants, from plants to animals, and from animals to man. As the transition is made the unity becomes greater, also the freedom. The highest unity is in man, if unity be a compound of differentiation and integration. But involved in this unity in man is a freedom that creates a problem in interpretation unknown to the scientist dealing with nature at the level of the inanimate. The botanist catches a faint glimpse of it, the biologist sees more of it, but the historian faces it with all of its baffling fascination. An astronomer, we are told, given three good positions of a comet, can with reasonable accuracy predict its appearance a thousand years hence. This same astronomer given three good positions of a robin on the lawn cannot predict the direction of its movement a second hence. The reason, of course, is that the bird has life and so something of freedom. It is this fact of freedom, and with it so much that is seemingly fortuitous and adventitious, that makes the task of the historian so difficult.

Further, that which the scientist deals with is complex, but never complicated; man in his recorded acts which the historian interprets is both complex and complicated. Because of this, there is something veridical about nature which man often lacks. A



modern writer has pointed out the distinction between the complex and complicated by using the illustration of the motor car. Such a car, so he reminds us, perfectly adjusted and with an experienced driver at the wheel is complex, but simple. The car ceases to be simple and becomes complicated when handled by an inexperienced driver unable to exercise control.<sup>18</sup> So it is with man. In history progress is the story of man winning his freedom. This consists of reducing the complicated by increasing the unity through control on the basis of the complex. Emanuel Kant each afternoon appeared in his doorway, cane in hand, for his daily walk. As he did so his neighbors set their clocks, for they knew it was exactly thirty minutes after four o'clock.<sup>19</sup> If humanity on the page of history only moved with the same precision, the historian's task would be much simpler.

Still another difference to be noticed is in the spirit of detachment. This is practiced more easily by the scientist than the historian. Detachment is an ideal for all workers in the field of knowledge. The historian, like the scientist, uses the scientific method. When, however, the method is applied by scientist and historian a difference is noted. The fact that the scientist seeks the meaning of creation at levels below

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<sup>18</sup> F. Matthias Alexander, *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual*, p. 14. John Dewey, in the Introduction to this volume, says the author "has demonstrated a new scientific principle with respect to human behavior, as important as any principle which has ever been discovered in the domain of external nature" (p. xxix). (Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company. Used by permission.)

<sup>19</sup> *Prose Writings of Heine*, p. 173. Edited by Havelock Ellis.

man, and the historian at the level of man, explains the difference. The astronomer studies stars, the geologist rocks, the botanist plants, the biologist animal life. But these forms of creation are distinct from man and can be more easily viewed in a spirit of detachment. With the historian it is otherwise. He studies the recorded acts of persons of like passions with himself. A Gibbon, who said that truth is the first virtue of serious history, crept loaded with prejudice into more than one of the stately pages of his history. Even a Thucydides revealed himself in his disparaging estimate of the ages before his own.

Beyond these difficulties as suggested by a comparison of method in science and history there are other conditions that help explain the reluctance of the historian in these days to accept this fourth assumption. One is the increasing secularization of civilization. The task of the historical scholar is to unfold the long and wonderful story of civilization. As he does this a significant generalization takes shape in his mind. This is, that as civilization advances secularization increases. Civilization is the story of man winning his freedom. Along with the task of gaining control over himself is the task of gaining control over nature. As he gains this control over nature secularization increases. Much that was once referred to the mysterious action of the gods or God is now explained as due to nature. The result is the "acts-of-God" language has disappeared except in the death resolutions of fraternal societies and in the receipts given shippers by common carriers.

Think, for example, of the attitude of mind during the Middle Ages to the existence of disease. Now estimate the meaning of Pasteur's experiment on a high Alp, when opening his flasks he demonstrated that putrescible matter becomes putrid when attacked by living things in the air. It was easy enough for the historians of antiquity, also the historians of the Middle Ages, to believe that God was in history, for everything not readily understood was consigned to the realm of divine action. But that day has passed never to return. This fact of increasing secularization need not weaken our belief in God. It simply means a restatement of our belief. Instead of believing in a God who intervenes in the affairs of men, we believe that God is in process of becoming in history through the forms of energy—physical, mental, and spiritual. But this restatement the historian is slow to make.

Many of our historians are about a generation behind the times. This, however, is not to be wondered at, because their work carries them into the past. Some of them, including the supposedly advanced thinkers such as Wells, Robinson, and Bury, would do well to soak their minds in the writings of Bosworth, Hocking, Jones, and Troeltsch. The fact is, our best theology and philosophy to-day are a generation ahead of the best history being written.

Another condition to notice is the emphasis placed upon the value of the obscure. History has shifted its emphasis from great men to ordinary men—from the somebodies to the nobodies and everybodies. The explanation of this change in historical writing is not

altogether clear, but the swing away from the exceptional to the commonplace is unmistakable. It is only necessary to glance casually at the volumes of history written as late as a generation ago and then at the volumes being written in this generation to see how pronounced is the swing. Probably modern science with its emphasis upon the importance of the minute has exerted an influence. Doubtless, the chief influence has been from the growth of the democratic spirit which is characteristic of the days in which we live. This democratic spirit Cheyney states as one of his six laws of history. But the important thought for us at this point is that this democratic spirit so pronounced in history has doubtless had its effect upon the historian as regards this assumption of God in history, for it is easy to believe in God in history, after reading an Epistle of Paul, the *Confessions* of Augustine, the *Journal* of Fox, or the *Life of John Paton*. It is less easy to hold this belief after reading about men instead of a man, and of finding something less personal and so less inspiring. The fact is, rational tendencies, social forces, cultural influences, and other rather vague things studied in history to-day tend to destroy certain luminous focal points in history, where light not found on land or sea shines.

One more condition to be mentioned is the wealth of material at the disposal of the historian. As regards this fourth assumption he knows too much about history to make easy, or even possible, the acceptance of this great assumption. He knows much more about history than the scientist knows about

nature. This may seem to contradict what has been said about the scientist, and especially about his skill in measurement. Yet, it is well to remember, that to measure a thing is not necessarily to know the thing. A measuring line on the flank of a mountain reveals little of the meaning of the mountain. Also let us remember that the inability to measure a thing may indicate not lack of knowledge but superiority to a thing measured. More may be known about the mind of Shakespeare than can be known about the astronomical world of electrons within the atom. Still, one is immeasurable; the other is measurable. So it is with history. More can be known about history than about nature. Vico says the reason is God made nature and man made history,<sup>20</sup> the inference being that man can know better a thing he makes than a thing made by another. Further, there is more in history to be known than there is in nature. This is an obvious truth, for man is the strangest and most wonderful thing in creation. But these two facts, more in history than in nature, and more of history known than is known of nature, are mentioned because they shed light upon the question, Why does the historian find it difficult to accept this fourth assumption—God? The answer is, Knowing so much about history, he finds much that seems to make against the assumption.

It would be interesting, had we space, to cull from the note-books of our modern historians the sentences that express this personal reaction to historical study. But let me give two such reactions: Creighton, in the

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<sup>20</sup> Benedetto Croce, *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, p. 23.

midst of his work, writes, "I am busy with the Borgias, and it is like spending one's day in a low police court."<sup>21</sup> Lecky, near the end of his life-work, writes, "The world seems to me to have grown very old and very sad."<sup>22</sup> It is the presence in history of so much that is blundering, ignoble, cruel, petty, and sinful that makes it difficult to accept this assumption. To be sure, there are other aspects of history. Along with the pages that are tear-stained, blotted, and blue-penciled, are clean pages of a dazzling whiteness. There are sacrificial lives, glorious movements, and lofty ideals in history. Nevertheless, there is so much that is baffling, seemingly accidental, and even debasing, that the modern historian finds it difficult to accept this fourth assumption.

Just where we should expect to find the strongest evidence of God's presence, namely, in history rather than in nature, is just where we actually find the most conflicting evidence. Wordsworth has this strange fact in mind when he says:

"To every form of being is assigned  
 An active Principle—howe'er removed  
 From sense and observation, it subsists  
 In all things, in all natures: in the stars  
 Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,  
 In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone  
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,  
 The moving waters, and the invisible air,

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<sup>21</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 368. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.

<sup>22</sup> *A Memoir of W. E. H. Lecky*, p. 293. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.

Unfolded still the more, more visible,  
The more we know: and yet is revered least,  
And least respected in the human mind,  
Its most apparent home."<sup>23</sup>

Having noticed the conditions under which the historian does his work to-day, let us pass to a few concrete situations in history which illustrate the difficulty of the historian in accepting this fourth assumption. Before doing this, however, a word should be said about certain difficulties that inhere in the general truth of God in human life, but do not belong to this truth, stated as an assumption of history.

There is the difficulty sometimes met with of believing in the reality of the unseen. The modern conception of energy lessens this difficulty. Also there is the difficulty of believing that God cares for individuals. Well, somebody cares for electrons, wave lengths of light, and myriad other things in nature. Another difficulty is that of suffering, especially the suffering of the innocent. This difficulty comes to the surface in history in the story of war, famine, and plague. Still, these difficulties belong to life at large and are not the special difficulties of the historian. The difficulties of the historian as regards this assumption are of the long-range-sequence-of-events kind. To make clear what we mean let us call them the landscape-of-history difficulties; that is, events seen over a considerable period of time.

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<sup>23</sup> William Wordsworth, "The Excursion," ninth book.

A situation which is occasionally met with on the page of history may be called the juxtaposition landscape. These juxtapositions are of different kinds—the juxtaposition of nature with human nature, the juxtaposition of events, and the juxtaposition of the individual with the event. This fact of juxtaposition is what gives to history so much of its fascination, also its mystery. Shakespeare understood this when in *Othello* he introduced the handkerchief.<sup>24</sup> In varying forms this is found in history. The story of the Greek mariners driven in a storm and shipwrecked on the Egyptian shore, followed by a journey inland, the learning something of Egyptian civilization, which they communicate to their countrymen upon their return to Greece. The story of the Pilgrim Fathers sailing westward, shut in by thick weather, unable to take their reckonings, and so landing on Cape Cod instead of at the mouth of the Hudson River, the outcome being New England. Many such juxtapositions of nature with human nature are found in history which reveals long-range sequences of tremendous significance.

Then, the juxtaposition of events. A single familiar illustration—the discovery of America. This event may be seen by itself. As such it will be a huge boulder or a mighty oak in the landscape, but given its proper setting it becomes part of a large stretch of landscape. For example, unfold a map of the world and visualize the fifteenth century. Trace the three

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<sup>24</sup> There is an able discussion of the problem of contingency in tragedy in A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, chap. i. The Macmillan Company, publishers.



trade routes, as clustered about the shores of the Mediterranean, connecting the Far East with the West. Follow the caravans as they move to and fro along these routes. See the Osmanli come down from the highlands of Asia, capture Constantinople and become masters of the lands lying between the Far East and the West. Observe the disappearance of ships and caravans from the trade routes, as trees and rocks fade from the landscape with the coming of night. Now, shift the gaze from the eastern to the western end of the Sea, and as the century nears its end, watch Columbus venture forth on the uncharted Atlantic and reach the New World.<sup>25</sup>

In this long-range sequence of events you have the three forms of energy. Here is the economic. A glance at the cities on the map will furnish evidence of this. For the business of certain Italian cities with the Far East was destroyed by the conquests of the Osmanli. A new route was sought that this business might be restored. So it may be said that the commercial interests of Genoa and Venice provided the economic pressure that pushed Columbus westward to America. The intellectual as a form of energy is here. It is easy to show the influence of ideas on the

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<sup>25</sup> In recent years this picture of the discovery of America has been modified. Less attention is given to the presence of the Osmanli in the Near East and more attention to the economic factors. The high cost of transporting goods, also the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route were the immediate causes for the shift to the westward. Still, the thought is the same in this long-range-sequence-of-events picture, whether drawn as above, or with more emphasis upon the economic. For a discussion of the new interpretation see, A. H. Lybyer, *English Historical Review*, October, 1915.

mind of Columbus. Brunelleschi's feat in standing an egg on end; the letter of the mathematician Toscanelli with its fertile suggestion of a route to the westward; also, the well-thumbed copy of Marco Polo, now in the library at Madrid. The spiritual is also here, if we accept at their face value the statements of the great explorer about his concern for the souls of the heathen in distant lands.

But the significant thing about this story is the marvelous juxtaposition of events. The Osmanli descending from the highlands of Asia, the closing of the trade routes to the East, the movement of Columbus westward in search of a new route to the East, and the discovery of America. Taken by itself this story of a century produces a deep effect upon the mind possessing something of a flair for such things. Heine has a beautiful sentence about Luther: "When during the day, he had wearily toiled over his dogmatic distinctions and definitions, then in the evening he took his lute, looked up to the stars, and melted into melody and devotion."<sup>26</sup> So with this large stretch of landscape—sky is glimpsed with clouds floating in the day and stars twinkling in the night.

Now, it is true that there are juxtapositions which suggest God—if we are allowed to select the juxtapositions. But there are other juxtapositions which do not leave this impression upon the mind. The juxtapositions of the individual with the event are especially baffling. For example, visualize, as far as possible, the French Revolution as an event. Picture the birth of an individual on the island of Corsica, his

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<sup>26</sup> *Prose Writings of Heine*, p. 159. Edited by Havelock Ellis.

boyhood, early manhood, and connection with the Revolution as a young captain of artillery. Follow him step by step as a child of destiny (whatever that means) until he is supreme in power as emperor. There can be no doubt that the course of this stupendous event was diverted by this single individual as certainly as the course of a river may be diverted by placing obstructions in the channel. What, however, makes this historical situation so baffling from the standpoint of this fourth assumption is that the diversion checked progress and aided reaction. The armies of France that early in the Revolution were "equality on the march," became, under the sinister influence of this individual, "tyranny on the march."

Now, the thought is, that fascinating and mysterious as this problem of juxtaposition is, it makes as often against as for the assumption. The grim pessimist, Thomas Hardy, in lines none too musical expresses the darker side as he uses the sinking of the ship Titanic for an illustration:

"And so the smart ship grew  
In stature, grace and line,  
In shadowy silence grew the Iceberg too.  
. . . . .

"Alien they seem to be:  
No mental eye could see  
The intimate welding of their later history.  
. . . . .

"Or sign that they were bent  
By paths coincident  
On being anon twin halves of an august event.  
. . . . .

"Till the Spinner of the Years  
Said 'Now!' and each one hears,  
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres."<sup>27</sup>

Another kind of situation met with in history is one in which the sequence of events stated in terms of the physical and intellectual so adequately explain the event that the sense of God as the mysterious power at work is not felt. To use again the landscape imagery, there are no clouds in the sky and no wind stirring. All is clear and easily discernible in the landscape. The economic and mental give the explanation.

One such landscape is the experiment in government of the American republic and the unifying effect of the inventions of steam and electricity on this experiment. Recall in general outline this story. In 1787 the Fathers of the republic assembled in Philadelphia and drafted the federal Constitution, which was ratified by the States. Under this Constitution a composite empire was formed with power lodged at the center, distinct from and in addition to power lodged in the parts; this power was expressed through law, which derived its sanction from the people, as alone the source of power. When the thinkers of the Old World heard of this form of government, they shook their heads, and said the thing was impossible. They admitted that democracy had existed in Greece, but it was the democracy of city states. They remembered that the cantons of Switzerland were held together in a confederation, but the area held together

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<sup>27</sup> "Convergence of the Twain." Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

was small. To think, however, of an empire covering a large portion of a continent, and based upon law, deriving its sanction from the people, was to think of the impossible. Only failure would be the end of such an experiment.

Yet the experiment was made. Settlers moved along the Mohawk Valley and through the Cumberland Gap. Prairie schooners as argosies of humanity glided over the plains. The pioneer song was heard :

“The hinges are of leather, and the windows have no glass,  
And the roof it lets the howling blizzard in ;  
And I hear the hungry coyote as he steals up through the  
grass,  
Round the little old sod shanty on the claim.”

Gradually the scientific frontier (not less than two or more than six persons to the square mile) receded. The god Terminus was pushed westward beyond the Mississippi River, over the Rocky Mountains, and at last tumbled into the Pacific Ocean. To-day there is an empire with a population of more than a hundred million.

What about the prediction of the Old World thinkers? Were they merely taking counsel of their fears when in the closing years of the eighteenth century they said such an empire could not endure? To say this is to forget the conditions under which they made their prediction. If these conditions are kept in mind, it must be admitted that their prediction was sound, for it is impossible to believe that an empire of more than one hundred millions and stretching across a continent could endure under conditions

as they existed in 1787. But changes came which neither the Fathers of the republic nor the thinkers of the Old World foresaw. About the time the Constitution was adopted the smoke of the first steamboat lay above the waters of a river. Forty-four years after the adjournment of the Convention a trackway was built, its first spike driven by a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and along this trackway an iron horse snorted. Fifty-seven years from 1787 the wires were strung between two cities and a telegraph message clicked. Eighty-nine years from the time the Fathers met man heard a human voice on the wire. To-day with receiver at ear, whether telephone or radio, a person on the Atlantic seaboard may hear the waves of the Pacific beating against the rocks.

Here is a striking landscape of government and invention. But there is nothing mystical or mysterious about it as far as its historical interpretation is concerned. It is a long-range sequence of events, the events in the sequence easily seen. Every detail in the landscape stands out as rocks and trees in a crisp northwest wind. The point is the landscape may be explained by the intellectual and economic—the intellectual a daring conception of government through law, the economic the inventions of steam and electricity as a form of energy strong enough to make feasible the idea as it holds the peoples of a continent together. To speak about God or Providence, in an historical sense gives no added meaning to the event.

A third kind of situation in history which causes serious questioning on the part of the historian is that of the appearance of a great movement which comes

into existence because of a failure of righteousness at a significant period in time. To make clear what is meant, think of two of the greatest movements of history—the rise and expansion of Christianity, likewise of Islam. Probably these are the two outstanding events of history. One of these movements, Christianity, has continued for nineteen hundred years; the other, Islam, for more than thirteen hundred years. Both of these movements are still expanding, at least in numbers. To-day followers of the cross and crescent are found in the continents of the earth and the islands of the sea. If age and size entitle a movement to respect, then these movements are certainly entitled to respect.

Christianity has meant progress. The progress, to be sure, has been “muddled.” Often enough believers in Christianity have halted on the roadway to beat time, have wandered into the bypaths, or even doubled on their tracks. But, seen in the retrospect of centuries, this religion has followed the roadway of progress. As mentioned in the last chapter, the central doctrine of this religion, the essential worth of the individual as derived from God, which entitles the individual to respect and a share of responsibility, and substitutes duties for rights, this great doctrine, as applied, has brought about a better civilization. The third assumption of history, namely, progress, is made reasonable, as the Christian doctrine of personality is traced on the page of history. This is affirmed, regardless of much that is being written in these days that either ignores or contradicts this assumption as stated.

What about Islam? Is there in this mighty movement a central truth that, traced on the page of history, reveals progress as the truth of personality in Christianity traced reveals progress? This is a big question, but one that the historian asks. Does he find in Islam such progress? Or is his attitude to this movement that of John Morley to the Roman Catholic Church: "I do justice to you in history—but still, still, I'm afraid of you"?<sup>28</sup> Now, it should be said, there is a tendency among some scholars to-day, especially in Germany, to give to Islam a value much in excess of that usually given. The basis for this enhanced value is philosophical rather than historical, although the term employed is "historical relativity." So thoroughly Christian a scholar as Troeltsch accepts this idea of history.<sup>29</sup> The doctrine, however, is pushed to its extreme limit in the sensational work of Oswald Spengler, of whom mention has been made. But some of us are skeptical about this "relativity" idea, if for no other reason, because it contradicts the noble conception of unity which is slowly taking shape. Still, regardless of this latest theory, the historian easily sees in Islam at its inception a reform movement, for a study of Mohammed the founder shows it to be a protest against the debasing idolatry that prevailed in Arabia in the sixth century.

But as the movement after the death of Mohammed is studied something else is seen. Suddenly it ex-

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<sup>28</sup> John Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii, p. 221. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

<sup>29</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, *Christian Thought*, sec. ii. University of London Press, Ltd.



pands as a fierce, cruel, fanatical movement. It spreads into Asia, then into Europe, and before long threatens to engulf the civilization of the Western world. Moreover, as the movement is studied to-day, something unlike the movement in the early days of its founder is seen. Millions, for the most part in Asia and Africa, constitute a world in themselves. The difference as compared with the Christian world is not the difference between the Orient and the Occident, for Christianity had its rise in the Orient and to-day is expanding in the Orient. Yet, Islam is apart. Its people can be stirred to fanatical zeal, but, if left alone, they remain inert. They live on a level distinctly lower than the level of the Christian people in other parts of the world. Seemingly they are impervious to any appeal of Christ's religion of light and love. Here is a movement vast in numbers and centuries old against which Christianity breaks as waves break against the rocks forming a mighty headland on the shore.

Now, what has been said about this movement leads up to what is the most significant thing about Islam for the historian. This is the condition under which Islam came into existence, for the historian is constantly being guided by a sequence-of-events assumption. The fact which interests him, and which usually is overlooked, is that Christianity, or what passed for Christianity at the time, is in a large measure responsible for the existence of Islam. For, the evidence is well-nigh conclusive that, had the expression of Christianity at the close of the sixth century, and in a particular part of Asia, been other

than it was, Islam would never have flamed forth from a bush that after centuries remains unconsumed. This is one of the most startling and poignant facts on the page of history.

To make this clear, let us recall a chapter in the life of Mohammed. At the age of twenty-five, owing to the exigencies of family life, he left his home and made a journey to Bosra in Syria. If the description which has come down to us is accurate, he was at this time a young man of reflective and inquisitive mind, with high ideals, but restless and feeling within a revolt against existing conditions. At twelve years of age he had with his uncle made the journey to Bosra. But there is nothing to indicate that the journey made any lasting impression upon him. Now, having come to maturity, he starts forth on his journey for the second time, his mind sensitive and alert. As he enters Syria he looks upon Christianity as it exists in organized communities. He sees the church building with the cross on its tower; he talks with priests and believers; he mingles with the people at the hour of worship.

But, alas! it is a decadent and corrupted form of Christianity he looks upon—a kind of mumbling, superstitious excuse for religion, which would make as little appeal to his alert mind and hungry heart as it would to the mind and heart of a wide-awake, earnest young man to-day. The result is, he turns in disgust from the organized religion he sees, returns to Mecca, and becomes the founder of a new religion, that quickly passes into the narrowing, fatalistic movement known as Islam. Here, if ever, is found the cruel, bitter irony of history—the greatest man of his

century, in the plenitude of his young, manly power, asking for bread and receiving a stone! As one of the ablest of his biographers says: "Had he witnessed a purer exhibition of its rites and doctrines, and seen more of its reforming and regenerating influences, we cannot doubt that, in the sincerity of his early search after truth, he might readily have embraced and faithfully adhered to the faith of Jesus."<sup>30</sup>

Now, the student of history, securing a bird's-eye view of this long-range landscape of history, a view that sweeps the centuries from the sixth until our own century, that begins far away with Mohammed visiting Bosra, that includes the clashes between Christian and Moslem, that presents Islam to-day as a huge mass resistant to progress—the student of history who catches this bird's-eye view finds it extremely difficult to accept as reasonable the fourth assumption of God in history.

There is one more situation in history which may be mentioned to illustrate the difficulty of the historian in accepting this fourth assumption—God. This is the situation in which some beneficent ideal emerges only to be rejected or perverted. The terrible significance of the story of Islam in the centuries following the career of its founder, Mohammed, is in the failure of Syrian Christianity to express the spiritual ideal in the hour of supreme opportunity. But in the situations we are about to outline the tragic meaning is in the rejection or perversion of ideals clearly expressed.

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<sup>30</sup> Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mohammed*, Edited by Weir, p. 23.

Among the two or three greatest ideals of history is the ideal of freedom of conscience. Man winning his freedom is the theme of the long story of history. A considerable part of this story has to do with man's conscience. So important is this ideal that many of our historians assert that the chief content of modern history is the emancipation of conscience from the control of authority. But the question arises, Why modern history? Surely, man in winning his freedom faced this problem of his conscience and its emancipation from authority long before modern times. It is this fact, the emergence of this ideal centuries ago, and its rejection, which gives us a situation—a stretch of landscape about as chilling as a stretch of nature with a slow, wet east wind blowing. To make clear my meaning recall the figure of Theodoric the Ostrogoth on the page of history. His is a giant figure—the figure of one of the makers and shapers of the world. The lines in the figure are somewhat contradictory. Nevertheless, it is the figure of a big-souled character, all of whose reasoning powers are not concentrated in his spear point.

As this rough-hewn giant of a man is visualized near the end of the fifth century he is seen as a statesman with a tremendous task before him. This task is to fuse together the Teutonic vigor which he and his conquering hordes embody with the Roman civilization as embodied in the conquered peoples of Italy. To state it in another way, his task is to alloy the fierceness of the Gothic temperament with the social culture of the land he has in subjection. To perform this difficult task he resists the "blonde-brute" tend-

ency to rule by force of arms. Instead he promulgates a doctrine of conscience as regards the individual and the state as full-orbed as any statement of the doctrine found on the pages of Milton. These are the words: "To pretend to a dominion over the conscience is to usurp the prerogative of God; by the nature of things the power of sovereigns is confined to civil government; they have no right of punishment but over those who disturb the peace; the most dangerous heresy is that of a sovereign who separates himself from part of his subjects because they believe not according to his beliefs."<sup>31</sup>

Here, in these words is flashed forth the beneficent ideal of freedom of conscience. When it is remembered that Theodoric was a battle captain, who by the prowess of his arms had Italy at his feet, and whose authority because of his prowess was absolute in affairs civil and ecclesiastical, this voluntary relinquishment of authority is superb. Moreover, it is well to remember that Theodoric and his hordes were in religion Arian and the conquered peoples were Orthodox—terms that connoted an intensity of meaning unknown in our day. Still, this rough, valiant man practices toleration. For, notice the closing words of his statement—"because they believe not according to his belief." The toleration of Theodoric was not that of indifference. Such indifferent toleration was common enough in the earlier days of Rome. Yet this battling leader of a conquering horde that had come down from the Julian Alps granted to others the right he claimed for himself—freedom of

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<sup>31</sup> *History of Latin Christianity*, Dean Milman, vol. i, p. 439.

conscience. As the imagination is allowed to play upon this act, something noble is revealed. Still, this ideal failed in his lifetime. Italy was probably the most enlightened portion of the world—certainly of the western world in the fifth century. But the people of this land refused this lofty ideal and in doing so provided one of the terrible failures of history.

But this ideal of toleration is not used as an illustration because of its failure in the lifetime of Theodoric. Such failures are all too common on the page of history. The failure of this ideal is mentioned because of the results that followed over a long period of time. The ideal did not appear as a star which in the late afternoon softly shines in the sky, twinkles gently in the gathering twilight, and dartles its red and blue as darkness overspreads land and sea, but as a star which suddenly flashed for a moment, and then as black clouds gathered in the sky was lost to view for a thousand years.

It is usually futile for the historian to indulge in the "might have been" as regards history. Nevertheless, there are certain long-range-sequence-of-events periods in history in which this thought inevitably comes to the surface of the mind. This is one such period. For it is only necessary to recall the history of Western Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries, especially the history of Italy, which during this period became the "cock-pit" of Europe, to realize the terrible meaning of the failure of this beneficent ideal, not for a generation, but for a thousand and more years. A mental visit to such a landscape of history causes a raw wind to chill the

hopefulness of the historian as he considers this fourth assumption—God.

Another ideal that may be mentioned as an illustration is that of nationalism. This landscape is less extensive than the landscape mentioned above. But it is only necessary to give this ideal its proper setting to perceive how difficult the assumption of God in history becomes. Without attempting any thorough treatment of this subject, it may be said that this ideal is modern; that is, it belongs to the last century of our history. Those historians who have dealt with the ideal, such as Morse Stephens and Rose, date it from the time of the French Revolution. If one were to trace the ideal in modern history, he would find it first in France at the time of the Revolution, then in the awakening of Germany in the years following the French Revolution, and finally in the United States during the period that is sometimes called the period of "manifest destiny."

While the term cannot be precisely defined, it is seen to mean certain things. As distinct from the imperial idea, it means a people living within geographical limits. It involves the unifying conception of law which rests upon the people as a garment covers the body. Further, it implies the people thus unified by law within certain geographical limits, as related to the other peoples of the earth. As Christ said of the individual, so it may be said of the nation, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>32</sup> In this sense nationalism is a beneficent ideal, and doubtless it was this conception that Fichte had in mind when

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<sup>32</sup> Mark 12. 33.

he declared, "The first original and truly natural frontiers of states are unquestionably their spiritual frontiers."<sup>83</sup>

This ideal to become effective, as is true of all ideals, needs to be coordinated with another ideal, that of internationalism. This is only another way of saying that the nationalism of one nation needs to be modified by the nationalism of other nations. Now, let the historian see this landscape of nationalism—a landscape that stretches from the closing years of the eighteenth century until our own day. If he does this, he will see two stupendous and tragic failures. One is, the awful perversion of the ideal in the life of the German people which has brought untold suffering upon themselves and the peoples of the world. The mysterious thing about it, as Kidd in his *Science of Power* has so impressively shown, is that this failure was the result of an excessive use of this ideal. For, let us remember that an ideal is an idea emotionally toned, and as such may be perverted. The other is the narrowing of the ideal by the people of the United States since the World War, which is making much more difficult the task of the nations in applying the ideal in terms of internationalism. What the situation is may be inferred from a paragraph written by Xenophon. He has been describing the battle of Mantinea (362 B. C.), in which he had lost a son. Then he closes with these words: "The result of the battle disappointed every one's expectations. . . . There was more unsettlement and disorder in Greece

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<sup>83</sup> Quoted by Rose, *Nationality in Modern History*, p. 34. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



after the battle than before it. But I do not propose to carry my narrative further and will leave the sequel to any other historian who cares to record it.”<sup>34</sup>

It may seem out of place in a work on history to indulge in prophecy. But in order to make clear the terrible meaning of this failure we will resort to prophecy and predict the attitude of the historian fifty years hence, as he deals with the ideal of nationalism in the history of the United States. He will begin, let us suppose, with Abraham Lincoln, who of all statesmen has given the most insistent and spiritual expression of this noble ideal. In his speeches, formal documents, and letters the thought of the experiment of government in his own land and the beneficent effect of this example upon other lands are constantly stressed. It is interesting to notice that his two classic utterances most often quoted—the Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural—both close with this thought. In the first of these utterances the closing words are: “That this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish *from the earth*.”<sup>35</sup> The closing words of the second utterance are: “To do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with *all nations*.”<sup>36</sup>

Along with these utterances of the great leader during the Civil War the historian fifty years hence will present the utterances of another great leader during

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in *Legacy of Greece*, p. 312. Oxford University Press, publishers.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. II, p. 439.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 657.

the World War—Woodrow Wilson. Neither of these leaders suffers by comparison as their thoughts about nationalism are studied. Owing to the nature of the conflict the speeches and formal documents of Woodrow Wilson give more prominence to the international aspect of nationalism, but in the utterances of both leaders the beneficent ideal is superbly expressed.

If only the historian fifty years hence could limit his study to the noble thoughts of these two Presidents! Alas, there is the story of the years following 1918—the story of a nation finding itself in the front rank as regards material possessions, due, in a measure, to the misfortunes of other nations; the story of a nation making a great refusal as it turns its back upon a constructive effort for the peace of the world, and in doing so losing something of its own soul. Will this historian as he writes the history of this ideal record the fact that the most sordid period in our history is the period covered by the years following the World War? The question has only to be asked to be answered. In doing this, however, he will find it difficult to accept as reasonable the assumption of God in history.

The historian, then, unlike the poet, philosopher, and scientist, does not accept this fourth assumption of God in history. Compared with the scientist the work of the historian as regards this assumption is much less favorable. Strange as it may seem, this is because the historian deals with the person, whereas the scientist deals with nature below the level of the person. In dealing with the recorded acts of the

more than all the political or educational are found in the state or school. But to ignore the institution and seek the truth in the solitude of lives that are abnormal is unscientific, notwithstanding the use in many instances of a forbidding scientific terminology. As regards James, his colleague, Josiah Royce explains this defect when he says: "James supposed the religious experiences of a church must needs be conventional, and consequently must be lacking in depth and sincerity. This, to my mind, was a profound and momentous error in the whole religious philosophy of our greatest American master in the study of the psychology of religious experience."<sup>35</sup>

To correct this error by finding the spiritual in the lives of the nobodies and everybodies as expressed in the church as an institution is a task awaiting the trained historian. He need not attempt the impossible task of finding the spiritual embodied in the church at large. Rather let him look with imagination upon the church that stands on the village green, by the cross roads in the country, on the side street of the city, as well as the imposing edifice, and he will find abundant evidence of the spiritual in the lives of humble men and women who in these churches worshiped God and through these churches served their fellowmen with a spendthrift magnificence. To be sure, those of our present-day historians who persist in writing history with a sneer as regards the spiritual will find much of pettiness and narrowness. But, if these writers will only use the scientific method

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<sup>35</sup> Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. i, p. xv. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers,

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SOLUTION

BOSWELL tells us that when Doctor Johnson was asked in the form of an affirmation the question, "Have we not evidence enough of the soul's immortality?" his reply was, "I wish for more." So the historian to-day as regards the assumption of God in history. Falling back upon the logical processes of his mind, the assumption seems reasonable. But he finds much in history making difficult the assumption. For with his eye on the actual page of history he comes upon facts that seem contradictory. Because of this, like Doctor Johnson as regards immortality, he wishes for more evidence. The question is, What further evidence is there, if any, in support of this fourth assumption? Before attempting to answer this question, let us sweep back in thought and gather up in a few words the answers given in the former chapters to the questions, Why? How? and What?

History we have thought of as the varied aspects of three forms of energy—physical, mental, and spiritual. According to the answers given by Marx, Hegel, and Augustine to the question Why? some one of these forms of energy is the determining factor in history to the exclusion of the two other forms of energy, which exist as conditioning influences. These forms of energy, regardless of the question as to which one of them is the determining factor, have meaning in history only as found in the person. For

the person (individual or collective) is central in history, and the task of the historian is to recapture the processes of the past, in order to find the person. This is the answer to the question, How? While these two questions, Why? and How? indicate our desire to understand history, we have not allowed this desire to interfere with the attempt to know what history is. So in the third chapter we turned to the actual page of history to find there an answer to the What? This answer shows that evidence exists to support the claim that each of these forms of energy in a considerable number of outstanding events is a determining factor; that is, no single form of energy, to the exclusion of the other forms, as Marx, Hegel, and Augustine believed, is dominant in history. Then, it was pointed out, that in the study of history to-day certain assumptions are accepted as reasonable. These are: a sequence of events, a unity pervading all events, and a progress traceable through events. These assumptions lead to a fourth assumption—God. Although accepted as reasonable by the poet, philosopher, and scientist, the historian finds it difficult to accept this assumption. The reasons for this were given in the last chapter. For we have resisted the temptation of treating as obvious a great truth by simply avoiding its difficulties. On the contrary, we have sought to state frankly the difficulties of this great assumption in history.

With this brief summary before us, let us consider what further evidence exists in support of this fourth assumption. To do this three groups of facts will be presented. The facts in two of the groups either have

been stated or implied in what has been said; the facts in the third group introduce a new thought into the discussion.

The facts in the first group consist of the limitations under which the historian necessarily does his work. As these limitations are understood it is seen that a liberal discount needs to be placed upon any conclusion reached by the historian regarding the final meaning of history. At least it is not necessary to take too seriously the historian's reluctance to accept as reasonable this fourth assumption—God, for, as was shown in answering the *How?* the task of the historian is to find the person in history. In doing this he comes upon some wonderful truths, but he also becomes conscious of certain inevitable restrictions under which he does his work. He reaches truths never reached by the scientist; he discovers limitations that the scientist knows nothing about. It is needless to say that these limitations are mentioned with no thought of disparaging the workers in this vast field of knowledge. The trained historians are the ones who call attention to the limitations.

One of these limitations is the fact that any event in history as it exists in the record is always an imperfect revelation of the person. To recall the rather gruesome illustration used in an earlier chapter, the historian deals with the corpse, never with the living person. For example, consider how much of historical material exists in the form of the written word, whether on stone, parchment, or paper. Say the best possible for the written word and much can be said. Mention the fact that the addition or subtraction of

a letter in a word, as in atheist or "theist," changes the entire meaning; quote the advice of Wordsworth about throwing thoughts into logical form and acquiring the habit of looking at things through the steady light of words;"<sup>1</sup> even quote Emerson to the effect that

"He felt the flame, the fanning wings,  
Nor offered words till they were things."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the stubborn fact remains—and history furnishes abundant proof—that the written word is a defective medium of expression. On an island in Lake Superior is a grave in which rest the mortal remains of an Indian. At the head of the grave is a tombstone with the laconic inscription, "Killed by thunder." Eschewing any intention of being even remotely facetious, attention may be called to the fact that the meaning of the inscription depends entirely upon the word emphasized. What pages of interesting speculation might be written about the attitude of mind of the unknown friends of the departed who caused these words to be carved on the piece of stone! Still, the difficulty met with in the interpretation of these words is constantly met with as the attempt is made to recapture the processes of the past, for the moment the attempt is made the question arises, What do the words mean?

The document known as the Constitution of the United States as regards its wording was the subject

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<sup>1</sup> G. M. Harper, *William Wordsworth*, vol. II, p. 380. John Murray, publishers, London. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Fragments on the Poet and the Poetic Gift*.

of the utmost care. Preliminary drafts were prepared before the Convention assembled. Some weeks were devoted to a discussion of its exact wording. Yet the document was scarcely adopted by the States until the controversy began which has continued until this day as to just what the words mean. If this limitation is found in the records written in our own language and in a time so recent, how much more pronounced must be the limitation when we turn to records belonging to remote times and in foreign languages! For example, take a great word of the Christian religion, the word "grace." It is one of the noble words of the classical Greek; the apostle Paul, a Hebrew, borrows it and pours in a wealth of meaning; still later Augustine, with no knowledge of either Hebrew or Greek, reshapes the word under the influence of the Latin. What pitfalls await the historian who meets with the word in the records of antiquity and the early Christian centuries!

A second fact in this group is the limitations under which the historian does his work because of the subjective element. This element inheres in the human mind, and so finds expression in all human effort. But the limitation rests more heavily upon the mind of the historian than, for example, upon the mind of the scientist. The reason for this pronounced intrusion of the self in historical interpretation was given in a former chapter. Attention was called to the fact that the historian deals with the recorded acts of persons of like passions with himself, whereas the scientist deals with things, plants, and animals. This limitation, regardless of much talk about detach-



ment, the scientific spirit, the search for truth, and other such talk, is inevitable.

A history of antiquity with the names of Tacitus, Livy, Polybius, and Thucydides in the footnotes looks quite stately and impartial. As the ballast in the hold of the ship prevents it leaning over too far in a stiff wind, so these names at the bottom of the pages give to the history a suggestion of upright impartiality. Still, these historians, for the most part, wrote contemporary history. Thucydides participated in the Peloponnesian War; Polybius was present at the burning of Carthage; and one of the biographical masterpieces of Tacitus is that of Agricola, his own father-in-law.

The historian, however, does not free himself of this limitation by avoiding the snares of contemporary history, for the value of his work will be conditioned upon his ability to think himself into the past processes which he would recapture and so interpret. But in doing this he will come upon himself because he will come upon the person. Illustrations of this are many. A single one will suffice: Michelet and Taine each wrote a history of the French Revolution. Read Michelet and the event seems the most glorious in history; read Taine and the event seems the most horrible in history. But enough has been said to indicate the meaning of the poet's lines as applied to history.

"The faithful helm commands the keel,  
From port to port fair breezes blow;  
But the ship must sail the convex sea,  
Nor may she straighter go.

. . . . .

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From soul to soul the shortest line  
At best will bended be;  
The ship that holds the straightest course  
Still sails the convex sea."<sup>3</sup>

In this group of facts a third limitation is the change in the time element as it affects history. That a change has come in man's conception of time is a commonplace thought. This change, however, acting as a limitation upon historical interpretation, is not usually recognized. Yet the moment attention is called to the fact it becomes obvious. Two reasons for this change in the time element may be mentioned. One is the modern recognition of history as genetic. The assumption of a sequence of events means for the historian to-day that all history is genetic. This involves an increased reckoning with the past. The historians of earlier centuries, to be sure, saw a sequence in events and so sought for causes. But even Polybius never conceived of history as genetic. Thucydides began his study of the Peloponnesian War in a way utterly foreign to the historical scholar of these days. On the opening page of this memorable history are these words: "Indeed, as to the events of the period just preceding this and those of a still earlier date, it was impossible to get clear information on account of lapse of time; but from evidence which, on pushing my inquiries to the farthest point, I find that I can trust, I think that they were not really great either as regards the wars then waged or in any other particulars."<sup>4</sup> After making due

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<sup>3</sup> John Boyle O'Reilly, "The Convex Sea."

<sup>4</sup> Thucydides, Loeb Classical Library, bk. 1, sec. 1.

allowance for lack of historical material, the statement still remains remarkable. Especially is this so, as, noticing that he mentions wars, we remember that Marathon, Salamis, and Thermopylæ were events of an earlier day.

The explanation of this failure on the part of Thucydides to appreciate his past history is found in the conception of time that dominated the Greek mind during this period. Spengler, in the work mentioned in a former chapter, gives some interesting illustrations of the fact that for the Greek, time was in the present tense, and that he was unmoved by any thought of time in either the past or the future tense. He tells us of the inscription of a treaty between Elis and Heræa, which was to be valid "for a hundred years after this year," but the treaty is undated. This and other facts indicate that time for the Greek was in the present tense. This German historian uses facts such as this to buttress his theory of the relativity of history, which implies the denial of absolute truth in history. A simpler and more reasonable explanation of this conception of time, however, is that the Greek appreciated only a part of the truth of which the modern mind appreciates a larger part. That the modern mind easily grasps the idea of time in the present tense is seen in the fact that people to-day no less than in Greek days, eat, drink, and are merry, because, as they believe, to-morrow they will die. But, whatever may be the practical attitude to life of many, the fact remains that into the mind of the thoughtful student who interprets history has seeped a conception of time in the past tense.

of man, no less than the things in nature, are capable of such descriptions as to make reasonable certain assumptions which serve as guiding principles or laws.

Notice, however, the use of the word "description," for it is well to remember that a law, whether in nature or human nature, is simply an explanation or description based upon observation or experiment. There is nothing in history or nature due to law. Whatever exists is the result of some form of energy. Law is a term used to designate the description of the energy at work. In history, as we have seen, facts are grouped to form events, and as the facts forming the event are described in their relation and compared with the description of the relation of facts in other events, certain assumptions become reasonable which serve as guiding principles or laws for the interpretation of history.

Still, no Kepler or Newton has appeared to do for history what these intellectual giants did for the physical sciences. Probably no such intellectual pathfinder ever will appear. For the task of finding law in history is relatively more difficult than the task of finding law in nature. This is so, among other reasons, because the scientist deals with the here and now, the historian with the there and then. The scientist has his eye on an object in the present; the historian handles the record of an object in the past. But of this something more later. Yet, owing to the change in conditions under which the historian does his work to-day, vastly more is known of the operation of the different forms of energy than was known

Now, the point of all this is that because of this changed conception our time perspectives are modified and in some instances almost blotted out. A sailing vessel on a small lake seems big; the same vessel on the ocean and miles off shore seems small. The same holds with the events of history. Recorded history covers a period of perhaps six thousand years. But what are six thousand years in comparison with the time covered by the evolutionary process? When some of the disturbing events of history, such as the rise of Islam or the perversion of noble ideals, are given the background of the modern conception of time, these events do not lose their significance, but the historian becomes less dogmatic in asserting what the significance is.

The fourth of the limitations in this group of facts is due to the meagerness of the material at the disposal of the historian. This may seem to contradict some things said in the second chapter about the danger of missing the person because of the vast amount of material. Yet there is no contradiction. For there is a vast amount of material only in a relative sense. Perhaps a comparison of history with astronomy will illustrate the thought. A novice reading a book, glancing at a chart, or looking through a telescope, is impressed by the number of stars in the sky. The Milky Way, for example is a heavenly White Way in a dark sky made by myriad worlds of light. But the trained astronomer receives no such impression as he pursues his work, whether mathematical or observational. For him the dominant impression regarding the heavens is one of emptiness.

He realizes in a degree the vast distances between the stars. So it is with the field of history. To the casual student the shelves in the libraries are burdened with historical material. But the scholar, who is accustomed to handle source material and weigh authorities, knows how meager is the amount of material.

In these days much attention is given to that antique gentleman known as the Man of Java. This is because the anthropologists believe him to be the oldest human whose remains have been found in the earth. Having received this honor, no popular work on science dealing with the antiquity of man is properly published unless it contains a picture of this man. And, it should be said, he looks well in a picture. As I write, two pictures of this ancient man are before me. But they are unlike. The explanation, of course, is that these pictures are fanciful. Under one picture is the word "reconstruction," and under the other picture the word "restoration." But a reconstruction or restoration of what? The answer is, of a skull cap, a thigh bone and two teeth, found somewhat scattered a generation ago by a Dutch surgeon named DuBois. As the pictures are examined, knowing the actual amount of material they had to build on, two questions are suggested: One is, Are they really pictures of a human? The other is, If human, how nearly do these pictures resemble the original?

Well, all this about the few bones and the reconstructed picture suggests the position of the historian to-day. Recall the metaphor of history a person. The amount that we know about him in rela-

tion to the unknown is as the skull cap, thigh bone, and two teeth to the rest of the body of the antique specimen. There are vast empty spaces in history. There are periods in history with gaps or interstices. It would surprise the reader unacquainted with historical work to be told how meager is the amount of first-class material at the disposal of the historian for certain events or periods in history which seem quite familiar to us. A couple of illustrations will make this evident.

Now, strange as it seems, this meagerness of material sometimes creates a mental illusion, causing us to think we know more about an event than is actually known. Probably one of the clearest and most familiar mental pictures in the past is that of Athens in the Golden Age of Greece. It is a picture easily formed and imprints itself vividly in any mind possessing a little imagination. Like a castle seen in the distance, its walls bathed in sunlight and its turrets cutting the sky line as they rise in the crisp air, so the Golden Age of Greece is seen in the past. But as the castle stands out because of its location on a commanding eminence, also because of the absence of other buildings on the landscape, so with this wondrous period of Greek history. Its vividness creates the illusion of intimacy, due to our ignorance regarding the web of complex influence that surrounds and permeates the event; that is, we seem to see clearly the Golden Age because we actually see so little. To state it in the form of a paradox: If we only knew more about this period, we should discover that we knew less about the period. This holds true

not only of this particular event but of the ancient world at large.

Consider also the question of ideas and sentiments in shaping the events of history. The task of the historian is to see the person. Until he does this interpretation is impossible. But he must do more than this, for he must see out of the person; that is, he must understand as far as possible the springs of action. In this sense the clue to historical interpretation is psychological. Now, the modern psychologist has made a real contribution to historical study by showing that it is the sentiment rather than the idea that causes men to act. To state it in another way, it is faith in an idea rather than the idea itself which leads to action. When to the idea is added faith, then the idea passes into a sentiment, which means that the idea becomes emotionally toned. But the fact which must impress anyone who ponders the meaning of history is how little of the sentiments affecting conduct and creating the events of history ever pass into the record.

For an example, consider the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The story of this sacrament gives us one of the stupendous events of history. First-class historians know this to be true. None of them, however, is willing to tackle this event. Why is this? The answer is, that to recapture the process through the centuries it would be necessary to interpret the sentiments of the nobodies and everybodies—the multitude which no man can number. They can state certain ideas connected with the beginning and the development of the sacrament, but the really signif-



icant thing and the thing we want to know they cannot state. Because of this the history of this sacrament will never be written. Like the fact of freedom in history, its existence is known, its influence is felt, some statements about it are made, but its real interpretation is impossible.

Such are some of the limitations under which the historian necessarily does his work. In seeking the person he discovers that the medium through which the person expresses himself is defective. Being himself a person, he confesses the warping effect of his subjective self as he interprets the person. The person when found in events he is compelled to give a new and vaster setting, because of the illimitable extension of the time element. Finally, under the guidance of the metaphor of history a person, he knows that the material at his disposal is relatively meager in amount. Because of these limitations we are justified in not taking too seriously the failure of the historian to affirm this fourth assumption—God. Could the limitations be lifted, possibly the difficulties in history would seem less serious.

A second group consists of certain facts in history, which taken by themselves seem to make reasonable this assumption of God; that is, were the difficulties mentioned in the former chapter unknown, these facts so grouped would constitute a strong argument in support of this assumption. To appreciate these facts it is not necessary to lift the eye from the page of history. All that is necessary is to lift the eye from particular events and secure a bird's-eye view of

history. If this is done, these facts will stand out with considerable significance and lessen somewhat the difficulty of accepting the assumption.

Before passing to a consideration of these facts a word should be said about our use of the term "assumption." The philosophers tell us that the final proof of any truth is always negative. They mean by this that until the denial is utterly absurd the final proof is lacking. This seems to have been in the mind of the psalmist when he exclaims, "The fool saith in his heart, There is no God."<sup>5</sup> To deny the existence of God seemed to the psalmist so ridiculous that one making such a denial must be a fool. It should be noted, however, that the psalmist has in mind the assumption of God's existence, not our assumption of God as the creative source of history. Now, this great assumption of God in history cannot be proven in this negative way. This is so, because the edge of utter absurdity is removed from the denial, by the existence of certain disturbing and difficult events. Possibly proof in this final negative way can be furnished for some of the assumptions in philosophy and science although some thinkers declare that this kind of proof can never be found for any assumption. Still, it must be admitted that in history, with the possible exception of sequence of events, such proof does not exist. At the best all we can hope for is the marshaling of the facts of history in such a way that the denial will involve more difficulties than the affirmation of the assumption.

Among such facts is the marvelous adaptation of

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 14. 1.

the earth to the needs of man. Strictly speaking, this fact lies outside of history. Still, in these modern days it is interesting to observe how science, philosophy, and history coalesce. The findings in one field of learning are carried over and used in the other fields of learning. Although this fact of the earth's adaptability to man's needs may belong outside of history, nevertheless it is implicit in that branch of history of which so much is made in these days—anthropogeographic history. Again, it is interesting to observe the tendency in these days to renew acquaintance with the thought found in the word "adaptation." A reaction set in a generation or more ago against Paley and his idea of adaptation. But this reaction has spent itself, and scientific thinkers are speaking about a grander teleology and the marvelous adaptation of the earth to the demands of life. This adaptation, they tell us, can be stated in terms of physics and chemistry.<sup>6</sup> They even point out the fact that the findings of modern science afford an illuminating commentary upon the words of the prophet when he says: "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; he is God; that formed the earth and made it; he established it, he created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited."<sup>7</sup>

This fact does not shape itself easily in the mind. Much reading, considerable observation, and—what is of the most importance—a patient pondering are required if the fact is to convey a message to the mind.

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<sup>6</sup>The opening chapter of Simpson's *Man and the Attainment of Immortality* contains a suggestive statement of this thought.

<sup>7</sup>Isaiah 45. 18.

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But when the fact is seen, it furnishes a background for history. To be sure, history deals with the person on the earth, not with the earth. But to find on the earth a marvelous adaptation to the needs of life—to the plant when it first appeared, later to the animal when it first appeared, and still later to man when he first appeared—is certainly to add nothing to the historian's difficulty of accepting the assumption of God in history. On the contrary, this fact when grasped lessens the difficulty. For the assumption does seem reasonable that the marvelous adaptability of the earth to the needs of man in the winning of his freedom is not the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, but indicates the work of a Vast Mind Energy. To see a well-built house being used by its occupants suggests that someone planned and built the house. Further, because the house is so well adapted to the needs of those living in the house the suggestion naturally arises that whoever planned and built the house probably had in mind the fact that the house would be occupied. This is only an analogy and need not be pushed too far.

All we would suggest is that the fact of the adaptability of the earth to the needs of man, implying as it does the Vast Mind Energy beneficently at work for man's welfare, naturally leads to the thought that possibly this Vast Mind Energy continues his beneficent work in the lives of those who make their struggle on the earth which he has provided. If he does continue this beneficent work, he is in history, for history is the story of man's life on the earth. Granted the fact of adaptability, the denial of the

continued beneficent work of God involves more difficulties than does its affirmation.

Another fact in this group is the increasing evidence of law in history. Law means the same thing in history as in nature. That is, a law is a discovery of repetitive constancy. This discovery is made by description. The process by which energy operates is described. If the description is given often enough and is always the same, then the description is called a law. For example, every description of an historical event shows the event is never in isolation. On the contrary, every description shows the event related to other events. This gives us the law or assumption of sequence of events. Now, the feeling is in the air that these laws or assumptions will be increasingly understood. That law in history as in nature is a fact. No scholar would think of denying this fact. But what especially interests us is the prevalence of a feeling that marked advance will be made in the discovery of a repetitive constancy. The attempt of Cheyney, mentioned in a former chapter, is prophetic of the new day. Flint in the generation just past had this in mind when he said, "The ultimate and greatest triumph of historical philosophy may not unreasonably be expected to be the full proof of Providence, the discovery by the processes of scientific method of the divine plan which unites and harmonizes the apparent chaos of human actions continued in history into a cosmos."<sup>8</sup> A thinker of this

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Flint, *The History of the Philosophy of History*, p. 158. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

generation, Adams, has the same thought when he says, "The enormous success of modern science in winning control and mastery over the energies of the physical order leads irresistibly to the hope of extending this success to the world of human society."<sup>9</sup>

These laws, as has been said, are found less easily in history than in nature, the reason being that the person is central in history. As such he acts under laws that are mechanical; also under laws that are mental and spiritual. These mental and spiritual laws are what baffles the historian, for the person who expresses himself through energy that is mental and spiritual suggests much that seems like the fortuitous and adventitious. Yet the conviction is well grounded in the minds of thinkers to-day that energy, in whatever form—physical, mental, or spiritual—and wherever found, whether in nature or history, is never haphazard. The engineer constructing a bridge across the stream is quite as much under law as the bit of driftwood floating in the stream. The movement of the driftwood, to be sure, is explained by mechanical law, whereas the action of the engineer requires in addition to mechanical, law that is mental and moral. The difference, it may be granted, between the engineer and the driftwood is so great that it constitutes a difference in kind. Nevertheless, the energy in both instances operates in an orderly way, could the way be traced.

Now, the existence of law in history, regardless of the fact that our knowledge of the law is extremely

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\* G. P. Adams, *Idealism in the Modern Age*, p. 177. Yale University Press, publishers.

limited, does lessen somewhat the difficulty which the historian feels as to this fourth assumption. For one thing it suggests that God's attitude to man in history is one of permission rather than commission because in his infinite wisdom he has ordained an evolving humanity under a reign of law. Further, it suggests that God as the Vast Mind Energy revealed in the adaptability of the earth to man's needs continues to reveal himself in the forms of energy operative in the lives of men who live upon the earth. That is to say, God is at least as much interested in the occupants of the terrestrial house as in the house itself. To find God in nature and not in human nature seems to me unreasonable, for it implies that he is more interested in things than in persons.

A third fact in this group is the timeless element in history. This has been mentioned more than once in former chapters. It is probably the most significant discovery a student of history can make. For this fact, more than others, holds us to the truth of the person being central in history. The fact is remarkable as we remember that a genius living under the conditions of time and space can so express himself as to transcend both a particular time and given place. Shakespeare's *King Lear* rises above England of the early part of the seventeenth century. More remarkable is it that ordinary men everywhere have in them the capacity to respond to extraordinary men anywhere. But the most remarkable thing about this fact is that anything done anywhere has in it this timeless element because hu-

man beings everywhere understand the thing done. The record of the action may be remote in time or near at hand; it may be a trivial act or an exceptional act; it may be degrading or ennobling; but man to-day can understand the act, for all history is contemporary.

This fact of the timeless element has long been known. Among the most moving of the passages in Augustine's great work, *The City of God*,<sup>10</sup> is the passage in which he comments upon the words of the Preacher in Ecclesiastes. The Preacher says: "That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."<sup>11</sup> Michael Angelo sees the fact from a different and nobler angle when he says:

"The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest  
In that which perishes: nor will he lend  
His heart to aught that doth on time depend."<sup>12</sup>

Just what the meaning of this mysterious fact is cannot be easily stated. Two or three implications, however, may be mentioned that bear directly upon the assumption of God in history. One is that the timeless element points in convincing manner to the fact mentioned a moment ago, namely, the existence of law in history. This law has to be established by a description of events. Still, the fact that any act, anywhere, and at any time can be understood by man everywhere, makes a denial of law in history almost

<sup>10</sup> *City of God*, book xii, sec. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ecclesiastes 1. 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Sonnets*, Wordsworth translation.



absurd. This implication, it seems to me, has not been made enough of by historical philosophy.

Another is that in this fact of the timeless element is found strong evidence in support of the second assumption of a unity pervading all history. The student knows that by an appeal to the particular events in history this assumption of unity cannot be proven. There are too many gaps in the record to make possible such proof. For example, Spengler claims that history consists of eight distinct and independent Cultures. Among the eight is the Maya of Yucatan and Mexico. But the record of this Culture as a continuation of some one of the earlier Cultures does not exist. We believe, however, there is a unity. One reason for this belief is this fact of the timeless element in history.

Implied in this truth of unity, the fact of the timeless element leads to the thought of human beings anywhere and at any time members of one family, for the fact we are considering offers unusual and most convincing evidence of the scriptural statement that all mankind constitute a family. In these days much is being written about the sharp and ineradicable distinctions among races. But let the reader of such literature have in mind this fact of the timeless element and much that these writers are saying will lose its meaning. For, underlying all racial and other divisions is a unity, even as the earth below the surface of the water unites the continents of Europe and Africa, although they seem to be separated by the Strait of Gibraltar. Now, this fact of a timeless element, suggesting as it does law and unity in history,

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also one family of mankind, makes reasonable this assumption of God in history.

A further fact in this group is the existence of the spiritual as a form of energy. This kind of energy may be perverted. Evidence of this is frequently met with on the page of history. Such perversion, however, raises a far-reaching ethical question about conduct, for it raises the question whether the worth of conduct is determined by the motive or by the act. For example, the millions in Germany in the years before the World War were emotionally trained to accept an ideal presented to them by the military party. This was a cruelly false and perverted ideal. Nevertheless, millions accepted this ideal and brought upon themselves and others untold suffering. The motive of the ruling military party was selfish and ignoble. But there is no reason to believe that the motive of the misguided millions was other than worthy. The significant thing is that in humanity there is a form of energy which may be appealed to, and which Kidd calls the emotion of the ideal.

Turning from this particular aspect of the spiritual, two things may be said about the spiritual as revealed in history, which bear directly upon this assumption of God in history. The first is that the person who is central in history is a religious being. The question of the origin of this something in man called the religious need not be discussed. The fact itself, that the person in history is a religious being, is what interests us. The extension of the time element, creating that vast field known as prehistory, but strengthens our thought of man as a religious

being. Connected with this broad truth of man by nature religious is the truth that man has developed his religious nature and experienced God. The time has passed when testimony of this kind can be ignored. The application of the scientific method to history makes this impossible. How widespread this experience of God is there is no way of knowing. At the best, the historian is able to discover an instance of such experience only occasionally as it happens to appear in the life story of some good man. Yet, if we should eliminate from the whole body of history those portions which are related to the actions of men who believed that they experienced God in their lives, then much of our most ennobling history would be lost.

It may be objected that to assert the presence of God in particular lives is not the same as to assert the presence of God in history, for the assumption of God in history implies his presence in all history. Now, those who find it difficult to accept this assumption say there are events in history which seem to indicate the absence of God. But this disturbing situation frequently met with in history may be explained when we remember that law is in history as in nature, and that man wins his freedom under the conditions of moral law. This, let us admit, is far from a satisfactory explanation, and at best only throws a ray of light upon the problem. But, if in addition to this thought, we keep in mind the broad fact that man by nature is religious, and, further, the fact that many of the somebodies and an indefinite number of nobodies and everybodies have experienced God in their lives, then it becomes less difficult to accept the

assumption that God as the Vast Mind Energy, through the spiritual energy in man is seeking the fulfillment of his holy will. And by the will of God is meant, as Bosworth says, "The intelligent set of a Vast Mind Energy toward a goal."

There remains one more fact in this group to be noticed, namely, the value of the catastrophic as evidence of progress. The existence of the catastrophic in history presents, as every student knows, phenomena that often prove too much for his interpretive skill. The historian dealing with the catastrophic is like a man wandering in a dense forest. Night comes and he finds himself in the midst of an impenetrable darkness. With the coming of day, although the somber gloom is in the forest, there are also many glints of light as the rays of the sun steal through the overhanging foliage. So with the historian and the catastrophic. Some of the history of this kind is enveloped in an impenetrable darkness as far as human explanation is concerned. For example, the question of maladjustment of circumstance to character, or the suffering of the innocent, especially the suffering of little children.

But along with these night hours there are the hours of day when glints of light are seen. To break from the figure, much of the catastrophic in history yields a rational interpretation and is found to have a value as evidence of progress. Two or three illustrations will be given. To-day, it is a commonplace of thought that progress is related to failure. There is an interesting little incident in the life of the father of Lister, the eminent surgeon, who applied Pasteur's

method to the treatment of wounds in surgery. His father in old age was nearsighted. Because of this, when he desired to see some object at a distance, he looked through a bubble in one of the panes of glass in the window of his room. The result was he came upon an important principle of optics which later was applied to the manufacture of lenses. The biographer who tells the incident remarks that he was the first man to successfully build a reputation upon a bubble. Now, this simple incident illustrates a great truth in progress—success through failure.

Then the element of discontent in human life, which explains so much of the catastrophic is seen in the retrospect of history to be evidence of progress. At the time of the catastrophe this aspect is obscured, but with the passing of the years and the giving of the event its proper setting the discontent is seen to be an indication of growth. To illustrate this thought think of a couple of modern catastrophes. One, the American Revolution. The historian who writes of this catastrophe to-day begins with a proposition something like this: "The colonists of the New World, being the freest people on the face of the earth, desired and were entitled to more freedom—hence the Revolution." The same thought is found in the history of the French Revolution. For the historian to-day starts with the assumption that France was the most enlightened nation on the continent of Europe during the years of the eighteenth century.

There is also a glint of light thrown upon the fact that methods have been used in history which later generations have shown to be cruel, inefficient, and

crude. What makes the present time so fraught with unspeakable significance is the possibility that mankind at last has reached the stage of ethical development when, seeing the awful futility of war, it will forever banish it from the earth as a means of settling disputes between nations. I say advisedly "stage of ethical development," for the question is not one of mental development. Progress is conditioned upon the physical and mental, but the determining factor is the spiritual. The question is whether the spiritual as a form of energy is strong enough. If this energy in the life of man shall assert itself and banish war, then a suggestion as to the meaning of war in history will be found in the words of Mrs. Browning:

"Children use the fist, until they are of age  
To use the brain,  
And so we needed Cæsar's to assist  
Man's justice, and Napoleon's to explain  
God's counsel."<sup>18</sup>

Finally, what a flood of light—not merely glints of light—is thrown upon the spiritual meaning of the catastrophic as we gaze reverently upon the supreme catastrophe of history—the cross of Christ! It is not within the plan of this study to discuss this overwhelming event in history. All that need be said for our purpose is that this cross when planted on the hill outside of Jerusalem was the symbol for those who stood by of degradation and utter defeat. Ere long, through the presence of some power more than

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Rose, *Nationality in Modern History*, p. 75. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

human working in history, this same cross became as the glittering eye of God. What makes it so marvelous as an event in history is that the One who suffered death seemed to understand the far-reaching meaning of the cross. Its arms were to cast a long shadow down the centuries, so he believed. For he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."<sup>14</sup> Again he said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."<sup>15</sup> To-day devout millions bear testimony to the penetrating insight of these words and believe that in the cross they have evidence of God's presence in history. Here is evidence of the value of the catastrophic as indicating progress in history!

Such, then, are the facts in the two groups. In the first group are facts reminding us of the limitations under which the historian necessarily does his work: the defective medium through which the person who is central in history expresses himself, the inherent warp of the human mind which is intensified in the mind of the historian because he seeks the meaning of persons like himself; the vast extension of the time element due to the genetic conception, also the findings in other fields of knowledge; and the meagerness of the material at the disposal of the historian. In the second group are facts giving added significance to history: The adaptability of the earth to the needs of man; the evidence of law in history, no less than in nature; the presence of a mysterious timeless ele-

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<sup>14</sup> John 12. 32.

<sup>15</sup> John 16. 7.

ment in history; the person in history as a religious being; and the value of the catastrophic as evidence of progress.

These two groups of facts thus brought together do not give conclusive proof of this fourth assumption—God in history. The difficulties remain and indicate that from the events of history this proof cannot be adduced. But the first group of facts justifies our caution in accepting as final the historian's negative conclusion regarding this great assumption. The second group of facts as placed over against the difficulties found by the historian lead us to believe that a denial of the assumption seems less reasonable than its affirmation.

But the last word has not been spoken regarding this stupendous assumption. There is still another group of facts. This group consists of the facts of Christianity in the person of its founder—Jesus Christ. Before noting the meaning of two facts in this group in relation to this assumption of God in history, let us consider for a moment the fitness of introducing a religious subject such as Christianity into a historical discussion. If it be granted that religion is part of life, and that history deals with life as recorded, then there need be no question about the fitness of bringing this historical discussion to a close by a mention of certain facts in Christianity. In these days there is a marked tendency to treat history as a unified whole. We are asked to read what purports to be an outline of the history of mankind. But in giving the outline or in telling the story



to dwell at length upon the prehistoric, antique, mediæval and modern scientific, at the same time either to ignore or give scant attention to Christianity, is to commit an egregious historical blunder, for Christianity appeared in the first century; it exists in the twentieth century, and it existed during the intervening centuries. Measured both by time and space Christianity is the most stupendous event of history.<sup>16</sup>

Should the student care to pursue the thought further, he would find that Christianity has profoundly affected institutions other than religious. For example, the historian to-day who would understand the course of the political philosophy embodied in the founding of the American republic pays little attention to Rousseau and other French theorists and much attention to the meetinghouses on the hilltops of New England and on the fringe of the Appalachian Mountains, for the scholar knows that mankind is influenced more by ideas embodied in institutions than by theories printed in books.

More than this, the student will discover that in Christianity is found the most convincing proof of the continuity of history. If the student will grasp the thought of Christianity in its origin, development, and present status in the world, he will see how impressive the evidence is. Just at the present time historians are making much of continuity as traced in the connection between our Western civilization and the Greco-Roman civilization. They will find even

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<sup>16</sup> Measured by time alone, Buddhism is older. Measured by space alone, until a century ago Islam was more extensive.

better evidence in historical Christianity. But enough has been said to indicate that no apology is needed for introducing the subject of Christianity into a historical discussion such as this.

Our reason for doing this, however, is to point out two facts about Christ, the founder of Christianity, as these facts are revealed in the source material, namely, the Gospels of the New Testament. Before these facts are mentioned it needs to be said that Christianity appeared in the world in the first century as a row of facts. This thought cannot be emphasized too much, especially in dealing with Christianity as history. Those who are specialists in this particular field of history tell us that Christianity is the only one of the world religions to rest upon a historical basis; that is, it is the only world religion whose source material has received critical examination. For the historical scholar this thought is of the utmost importance. Likewise, the intelligent person with no special historical training who seeks information about the world religions needs to keep this thought in mind. For example, among the most entertaining and interesting pages of Wells' *The Outline of History* are those dealing with the three world religions—Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. This versatile writer seeks to present these world religions on the landscape of history as three lofty mountain peaks of about equal height and beauty. But, it will not do to question Wells too closely about his source material for two of these religions. The fact is, his narrative is better literature than history.

Having touched thus lightly upon the historical

aspect of Christianity appearing in the world as a row of facts, let us mention two facts about its founder, Jesus Christ bearing directly upon the great assumption of God in history. The first fact has to do with the earthly life of Christ as that life is portrayed on the pages of the four Gospels. Now, this portrayal indicates that Christ lived in a sinful world yet lived without sin. The portrait is of a character moving in the midst of men and sharing the burdens of men. His life was beset with the temptations that crowd in upon all human life. Still, in reading the story of his life moral weakness leading to defeat in any form is never suggested. The familiar story of Raphael drawing a perfect circle on a card and leaving it for an absent friend is an exact illustration of the earthly life of Christ. On the earth and within the limits of time with his own life he drew a perfect circle of conduct.

To say this in words is simple enough. Probably the statement of this fact awakens no sense of wonder in the mind of the reader. The fact is so familiar that it has lost the power of stabbing our spirits awake. Yet this fact of a life lived without sin on the earth and within the limits of time constitutes the one overwhelming event of history. The meaning of history is found in the record of achievement, whether the achievement is individual or collective: the record of an empire in its expansion or decline; the development of an idea—that of freedom reaching through the generations; the flash of genius in the work of a Leonardo or a Shakespeare. History deals with achievement. Well, in this fact of the sinlessness of Christ

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is the one outstanding achievement of all history. Had the historian in his possession the material, he would place this fact as the fourth in a series of facts. Perhaps he would call them the four birthdays of Creation. The first birthday on earth would be when the plant sent its roots into the ground, waved in the air, and revealed life. The second birthday on earth would be when the animal breathed the air, felt hunger, moved about, and revealed conscious life. The third birthday would be when man stood erect, felt, thought, willed, and revealed self-conscious life. The fourth birthday would be when Christ appeared, expressed life, conscious life, self-conscious life with such absolute perfection that for the first and only time the divinely self-conscious life was revealed.

The meaning of this astounding fact, regarding which exaggeration is impossible, will not be discussed, for this belongs to theology rather than to history. The fact, of course, starts many of the deepest questions of life which lead to certain religious doctrines. If these doctrines are left untouched, it is not because they are unimportant. Those who speak slightly of religious doctrines give evidence of superficial minds. No one in his senses speaks in this way of theory in medicine, of principles in law, or of method in science. Still, we avoid all mention of the questions involved in this fact, because such questions lie outside the scope of this study. Our only thought as a student of history is to apprehend this fact of the sinlessness of Christ as it appears in the row of facts of which Christianity consists.

In giving this fact its setting, it is seen as a unique

and unparalleled fact in history. Mention was made in a former paragraph of the effort to present the three world religions on the landscape of history as three mountainpeaks of about equal size and beauty. So far as this effort has for its purpose a generous appreciation of the truth in other religions there can be only sympathy. But the truth of history must not be sacrificed in the attempt. Now one needs only to examine the life story of Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, and the life story of Mohammed, the founder of Islam, in order to realize how absolutely unique and unparalleled is this fact of the sinlessness of Christ. To overlook this fact in the attempt to be generous or tolerant is to take the superficial attitude of Lessing in his drama, *Nathan the Sage*, built as it was upon the story of the three rings. Charles Lamb, spending the evening among congenial friends and discussing the high themes of life, remarked "that should Shakespeare enter the room, he would rise; should Jesus Christ enter the room, he would kneel." Well, most of us in humility kneel before him and say, "My Lord and my God."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps a few of us simply rise and greet him with respect. But to write about history and neither kneel nor rise—to miss or ignore the fact of his holy life is to commit a dreadful blunder, for it means to miss or ignore the one altogether astounding event in history.

Closely allied to this fact, so closely allied that it is involved, is the second fact in the row, namely, the

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<sup>17</sup> Although usually attributed to Lamb, same thought expressed by Hazlitt, a contemporary. See *Collected Essays of Hazlitt*, vol. xii, p. 38.

perfection of his teaching regarding man. Here, again, let us remember that our interest in this fact is as students of history and because of the possible light it may throw upon the fourth assumption—God in history. This fact of the perfection of Christ's teaching is not more remarkable than the fact of the perfection of his life. By itself this fact is not as remarkable as the first fact, for perfection of theory about life can never equal perfection of practice in life. Christian thinkers have made no mistake in throwing the emphasis upon the holy character of Christ. Nevertheless, for the historian the perfection of the teaching is even more significant than the perfection of the character. The reason for this, as we shall see in a moment, is that this fact of the perfection of the teaching reaches out into history in a way which makes it possible for the historian to deal with it by interpreting its meaning. With the fact of the sinless life it is otherwise. The Son of Man of the Gospels becomes the Son of God of the Christian Church. Its conquering power in the centuries may be explained by the ubiquitous presence of Christ in history. But the historian finds it extremely difficult to handle this truth.

Notice the statement is, "the perfection of his teaching regarding man." To confine the perfection, as in this statement, to the teaching about man is not to imply that there is any of his teaching that is less than perfect. The reason for stating the fact in this way will appear later. By his teaching regarding man is meant his great thought regarding personality as it is unfolded on the pages of the Gospels.

Here, let us say, this teaching had to do almost entirely with man's life on earth. This statement may come as a surprise to some of our present-day writers who dismiss Christianity with the remark that it concerns man and his life beyond. If these writers would employ the scientific method and acquaint themselves with the source material in the four Gospels, they would make a discovery. For should they with a blue pencil delete those sayings of Christ about the life beyond, they would find that most of the sayings of Christ would remain. The fact is, the teaching of Christ left almost untouched the question of life in the other world. His dominant thought was the creation of a new civilization composed of those who accepted his words. "Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock."<sup>18</sup> Even when he projected this thought of life into the world beyond and employed the imagery of a throne and himself as Judge, the test is the life lived in this world—the cup of cold water, the food for the hungry and the visiting of the sick. Attention is called to this dominant aspect of Christ's teaching in order to make it clear that his teaching is to be tested by history as any other teaching is tested.

Another thought that needs to be mentioned is that, in addition to being deeply spiritual, the teaching of Christ is profoundly intellectual. No one doubts the spirituality of the teaching of Christ. But this can be stated in such a way as to be misleading, for it is

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<sup>18</sup> Matthew 7. 24.

possible so to state this as to imply that his teaching belongs to the heart rather than the head. Well, it is true that his teaching primarily concerns the heart, because the problem of real progress is primarily a problem of the heart. Christ never was guilty of the fallacy spoken of in a former chapter, the fallacy of assuming that the more a man knows the better he is. No, the teaching of Christ would lack perfection did it contain any such thought. Nevertheless, the teaching of Christ would be less than perfect if it failed to reach the head with a message that challenges the intellect. If there is any doubt about this, let the mind ponder the great idea of personality as involving the source of worth, the respect based upon character, responsibility shared, and duties rather than rights. Here is mental exercise for the most vigorous mind. Simkhovitch, himself a teacher of economic history in one of our universities, says, "To me personally it seems childish not to see in Christ's teachings an overwhelming intellectual system."<sup>19</sup>

But the question which arises is this: How is it possible to find evidence in history to support what we believe to be a fact, namely, the perfection of the teaching of Christ regarding man? The evidence, it seems to me, is found in several directions. Turn to the teachings of the other two world religions, Buddhism and Islam. Along with much that is true there is much that is palpably untrue. Compare the program for society as given by Christ with the

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<sup>19</sup> V. G. Simkhovitch, *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, p. 71. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.



famous programs of such thinkers as Plato, More, Bacon, Campanella, and Harrington. There is much that is exceedingly suggestive in these historic dreams of a better world, but, alas! not a little that is plainly erroneous. Recall the great thoughts about life that have gradually gained acceptance in our thinking, if not always in our living, and discover among them a single uplifting thought that is not found in the teachings of Christ either explicitly or implicitly. Again, remember that the deepest longing of this age for a better world means a more serious attempt to apply to the conditions of life the teachings of Christ. As these thoughts are brought together and pondered, the conviction grips the mind that the teachings of Christ can never be outgrown because they are eternal.

Something has been said in a former chapter about the laws of history—Vico's attempt, Comte's effort, Kant's words about the need of a Kepler or Newton, and the latest experiment at formulation; that of Cheyney. But thinkers need not struggle so hard to find these laws. All they have to do is to apply heart and intellect to the teaching of Christ. To test this it is only necessary to take the six laws named by Cheyney and notice that these laws are in the teaching of Christ. More than one historian who has caught the long-range view has possessed this conviction. Harnack, considered by many the greatest of our living historians, in addressing the students of the University of Berlin revealed the hunger of his own soul when he said, "Gentlemen, the question as to what is new in religion is not a question raised by

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those who live in it."<sup>20</sup> He was speaking of the teaching of Christ and found therein a timeless element that satisfied the hunger of his soul. Ranke, the great historian of the generation just passed, after long years of toil in the field of history said: "Moral ideas could expand only in area, not in quality. Beyond Christianity it was impossible to go."<sup>21</sup> A disciple of Christ said, "He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man." Wonderful words! But not more wonderful than the fact that history proves them true.

"That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,  
Or decomposes, but to recompose,  
Become my universe that feels and knows."<sup>22</sup>

Now bring together these two facts about Christ—the perfect character and the perfect teaching, which constitute the two supreme events of history. The question arises, What have these two facts to do with the fourth assumption—God? The answer is that because of these facts a peculiar value attaches to anything which Jesus may say about life. If one can do two things in history that are absolutely unparalleled, and if the two things done are the two most significant things in history, namely, to make perfect history in the life lived and to reveal the perfect for history in the thought revealed, then the one

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<sup>20</sup> Adolph Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* p. 50. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers, New York and London.

<sup>21</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 100. Longmans, Green & Co., publishers.

<sup>22</sup> "Epilogue to *Dramatis Personæ*," Robert Browning.

who can do these things commands attention. What Christ says carried a weight of authority carried by the words of no other character in history. To assert this is not to invoke a blind faith or take refuge in a mere superstition. Rather it is a reasonable attitude toward truth.

Having said this, let us turn again to the teachings of Christ. The perfection of his teaching regarding man, as we have pointed out, may be tested in history. For this reason the emphasis was placed upon his great thought of personality. But along with this thought are other thoughts of Christ that cannot be tested. These thoughts profoundly affect history, yet in a sense lie outside of history. One such truth is this stupendous assumption of God in history; another is the equally stupendous assumption of personal immortality. In language that is deathless both these truths are found on the pages of the Gospels. Nowhere is argument used; always affirmation. That human life is embraced in the loving wisdom of God, and that such life is immortal, are taken for granted. Christ seems always to move and speak with the calm assurance of one who has come out of eternity.

These two truths of Providence and immortality are alike in certain respects. As has been said, both of these truths lie outside history. Yet, they are met with in life and so are in history. When met with, certain serious difficulties arise. These difficulties never have been removed, and, as far as we know, never can be removed. But granted the existence in life and history of facts which make difficult the acceptance of these truths, there are other facts which

make more difficult the denial of these truths. Some of these facts as regards the assumption of God in history have been stated earlier in this chapter. These facts, significant as they are, do not, however, demonstrate this truth. Nevertheless, they do make strongly for its reasonableness. It is conceivable that as man gains knowledge in the future this glorious thought of all history embraced in the loving wisdom of God will be established as are certain other truths. Man will prove in history what Christ affirmed about history.

In the meantime we accept the assumption of God in history as an act of faith—faith in Christ. This seems to me reasonable. To take any other position would be utterly unreasonable. For in history the two astounding events are the absolute perfection of his character and the absolute perfection of his teaching. These two unparalleled facts in history give to anything Christ may say about history an authority beyond any passing authority possessed by the scribes either in the first or the twentieth century. Because of these two facts, when Christ affirms a truth that I cannot demonstrate, I accept the affirmation as an act of faith, even the affirmation that God is in history.

“I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by the reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the earth and out of it!”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Browning, “Death in the Desert.”

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